

## The Unconvinced Housewife – Part 1 – Before

It's probably a good idea to know something of your fiancée's likes and dislikes. That's especially true if you believe a marriage is forever, as in let no man put asunder. How would you feel if she suddenly realized that you were setting aside your pocket money on preps? Maybe she's terrified of firearms, hates camping and can't see the need for stocking more food than a two week supply. Friend, you have a conundrum as in problem or challenge.

It helps if you had a few of the firearms before you married plus a good program in place for accumulating preparations. That way, you can discuss the subject before you tie the knot. If you're a God fearing Christian man, get an understanding before, not after. Don't guess, ask. For example, suggest a trip to a range so you can keep up on your shooting skills. She may go and like it. If she doesn't, maybe you should keep looking.

Show her the preps you've already made. If she implies you're nuts, keep looking. Lots of pebbles on the beach and you'll find the one God intends for you. Try to understand her side too; maybe she'll be satisfied if you have a gun safe, good camping equipment and a pickup that will seat 6 comfortably. Odds are she has her own car so you'll have time to teach her to drive your 4WD with 6 speed manual transmission and the non-electronic diesel engine with the light bars, pioneer tools and front and rear hitches to install your 12k Warn winch.

Of course the day she fills all three fuel tanks, you may have to pick her up at the ER. Figure about 200-gallons at \$3 a gallon. Better yet, fill it yourself and rotate tanks treated with PRI-D and just tell her it's a fuel additive to keep the fuel fresh. Any expensive firearms you want should be owned before you take the vows, with ample ammunition for each.

Once you're married, appeal to her innate shopping skills and have her double buy items on sale as a cost cutting measure. Also emphasize unlimited sales for common foods you eat. You have a million excuses you can use, 'the world is running out of wheat', or 'remember the rice shortage last year'? Tell her how much you like tuna, canned beef, canned chicken, SPAM and the like. Join Sam's Club and Costco if you have one locally.

Large bags are almost always cheaper per ounce than smaller bags. Add bath tissue, paper towels and Kleenex, because you never know. Check Wally World and local donut shops for 5 and 6 gallon food grade pails. Walton sells oxygen absorbers and various types of Mylar bags. Buy what you can locally and order the rest, a pail or two at a time.

Don't lie. Just put a positive spin on everything. Buy a 25# bag of bread flour and encourage her to bake some homemade bread and rave about how it's so much better than store bought. By this time you're well into it and she almost enjoys not needing to

go to the store if you are out of something. You're probably two years into your marriage and she's expecting. But, you can help, get a grain grinder and offer to grind the flour for her and help with baking and kitchen chores. You've also started your first garden, probably on the small side, but here's always next year.

You've been following the adage of 'if you can't beat them, join them', in reverse. Anything you want that you suspect she won't agree to, save your pocket money, it'll just take longer to get. Every hunter needs a shotgun, get a Mossberg 590A1 plus a hunting barrel and add a magazine stop so it's a legal hunting gun. Get a 5 round magazine or two for your MBR, so it's a legal hunting weapon. And, don't do it all at once.

While you're planning next year's larger garden mention the 30 quart All American canner which will can twice as many jars in one pass. Either find some good pickle recipes or buy the prepackaged pickle mixes. The odds are that by your fifth anniversary, you'll mostly be prepared.

I'm assuming you live in the country and can buy a feeder calf and a couple of hogs to fill that massive 25ft<sup>3</sup> chest freezer, eliminating another trip to town. But since you didn't marry a dummy, she's probably figured it out by now, or will when you talk about expanding the storm shelter or buying some equipment from KI4U. But, you kept up taking her to the range with you and just maybe she's lost her fear of guns and replaced it with a healthy respect. Probably outshoots you too.

She's a big city girl and claims, "It can't happen," although you know better. It's when, not if. Every location in this country has some local phenomena, hurricanes, tornados, bad snow storms, heavy rains, earthquakes and even volcanoes, just to name a few. Focus on your most likely phenomena and goose it a bit to protect you and your family.

That storm shelter could protect you against a volcano's pyroclastic flow if it had an air purifier from American Safe Rooms, Inc. If your water table is too high, build a double walled above ground shelter with 6' of compacted earth between filled concrete block walls. You don't tell her that the blocks and earth give you a huge radiation protection factor. Thirty six inches gives you 1,024 and 72 inches gives you 1,024 times 1,024, making the concrete blocks redundant except for holding the soil in place. Make sure the roof is covered with 6' of packed earth to make it totally safe.

Built that way, it becomes a manmade cave and should have an inside temperature like a cave, roughly 60° depending on where you live. She's still the unconvinced housewife, although she begins to see some value in being 'a little prepared'. Her largest objection in the beginning was those 'nasty' guns. Now, she's an outstanding shooter and because your M1A is the California legal one with the muzzle brake, she doesn't find the recoil too heavy. You surprise her at Christmas with her own set of firearms; you've been saving for a year or two and get her a matching set, PT1911, M1A Loaded (CA legal) and the Mossberg 590A1 plus extra barrel.

You have the magazines too, but save those as a bonus present for her next birthday. You still get her the regular Christmas presents, just not as many because it took 2 years to save for the guns while continuing your preps. You get her what she wants for her birthday and add the magazines and some LBE as a bonus.

So, you started your preps when Bush Jr. was bemoaning the attacks on the Pentagon and WTC. That was 8 years ago and you've been married since 2004. You have 2 kids and she switches to the pill because she 'has her hands full'. You've worked hard on your job and have made it to foreman or lead worker, take your pick. You work with your hands and put in the concrete foundation and slab for you aboveground shelter, laid the block and filled the space between with soil, compacting it with a rented or borrowed tamper. You put in the blast door with a friend's help and installed the air system by yourself.

Over time, you've finished the shelter and are down to needing a generator and supply of fuel. You manage to get a used Quiet Diesel 12.5 from a wrecked semi or motorhome and the repairs turnout to be minor. Another buddy from work helps you make the repairs. However, you don't have a fuel tank or fuel and until you install those and an Automatic Transfer Switch (ATS) you can't use the generator or integrate it into your electrical system. Your priority changes and you start looking for a fuel tank. Chance favors the prepared mind and your employer gets a contract to replace the fuel tanks at a station because one is leaking.

You discover that one of the tanks doesn't leak at all and ask what he intended to do with the tanks. You learn that they'll be scrapped and offer to buy the one you know doesn't leak. A scrapped fiberglass 10,000 gallon fuel tank that leaks has little value and you're given the tank for hauling it away. Just to be sure, you get some supplies, scrub the tank clean and add another layer of fiberglass. Next, you rent a backhoe or borrow one from work and dig the hole. You add a foot of sand and set the tank, running pipes to and through the shelter wall. You backfill and you're close to being there.

Inside the shelter in a corner, you put up walls to create a small room using 2x6s and R-19 insulation. The inside walls of the room are covered by soundproofing and you have the four air pipes. The exhausts are piped directly outside and intakes from your air purifier because you don't want the generator to become radioactive. The next decision is harder, ATS or fuel? You start with fuel, 500-gallons at a time, and try to save just a little each month for the ATS. You find you can only afford about 500-gallons once a quarter or 2,000-gallons a year. You do find a used 100amp ATS that became available when someone put in a bigger generator and a 200amp ATS, \$500.

One of the electricians from work wires in the ATS and your electrical system is complete in mid-2009, that 5 year point in your marriage. The economy is in the toilet, housing starts are off and times at your construction firm are tough. The new President has a one track mind, national health care and spend, spend, spend. The firm has a problem and the boss asks if you can help. He signed a contract to ensure the firm had adequate

supplies of diesel and the tanks are full. Can you store it for him in the tank you refurbished? He'll provide 4-gallons of PRI-D if you do and have a pump installed.

You can't believe your luck, you only have 2,000-gallons and 10,000 would represent a supply for more than a year. You tell him 'probably' you have to check with the boss at home. He explains that he's only committed to 3,000 a month and they're using 2,000 so it will probably be about 1,000 a month. Well, in that case, sure, I know she'll agree to that. You do mention you already have 2,000 and are adding 500-gallons per quarter. He says he must be paying you too much.

"Honey, you won't believe what the boss wanted today."

"Did you get laid off?"

"No, he has this contract for diesel fuel and he's obligated to take more per month than we're using. He wants to store the extra 1,000-gallons per month in our tank."

"Oh Dan, won't that cause a problem?"

"How? He's going to install a pump and we'll have the invoices for the deliveries and pump records for the withdrawals."

"And, I know you, you want that tank full as soon as possible."

"Yes Sara, I do. We've come so far these past five years."

"From your point of view. I can't believe what I've turned into a survivalist!"

"Prepper sounds much better. I'm not out to overthrow the government, are you?"

"It sure is different from living in Boston; that much I know."

"You come from the home of the American Revolution and say we're survivalists? We may be Patriots, preppers for sure, but not Revolutionaries. Or, was Paul Revere from somewhere else?"

"No, he was from Boston."

Sara wasn't exactly from Boston; she was from Salem, which was famous for another reason, the Witch Trials. I was in Salem for a job interview when we met. Didn't get the job, eventually got the girl. I never figured on ending up in construction with my degree in History, go figure. Anyway, she transferred to a job in Springfield and looked me up. We started dating and well, you know the rest. She had quite a bit set aside when we got married. She'd gone to work right out of high school for a Salem based company with a location in Springfield, Missouri and another on the west coast. She'd taken a promotion to the Springfield office.

There had to be something there, she'd looked you up and told you where she lived, her phone number and it became apparent she was fishing for a date. It had been an uphill challenge from there. Because you were the kind and caring type, with an agenda, you worked with her for these past five plus years. Even if you did get laid off, you had the small amount you'd been saving for the next 500-gallons of #2 and she had all of her savings, invested in what she never said. You had the impression that it was close at hand, but knew not to ask, it was her money.

The introductions are as follows: Daniel Baker, born on April 15, 1975 in Springfield, Missouri, occupation construction foreman and Sara Baker, née Simpson, born June 12, 1976 in Salem, Massachusetts, occupation homemaker. You had two children, Daniele Sara, born March 23, 2007 in Springfield, Missouri and Robert Simpson, born July 2, 2009 in Springfield, Missouri. A babe in arms, still nursing, and you had to help in the garden because of the baby and your Mom's limited ability; she didn't know how to can or hadn't in so long it meant the same thing.

Dad had been killed in an industrial accident when I was in college. Mom got a 'good' attorney and didn't want for anything. Although the amount of the settlement was undisclosed, she never remarried, suspicious that he might be out to get her money. I'm sure she lived on the income from her investments, but she never said. In fact, the only thing she said was, "You might be surprised."

Dad never had a gun safe that I knew of. Mom had a Fort Knox. She had reached the settlement in December of 1999 and had made her first investment, half of her share of the settlement, around January 2, 2000. The remainder went into a blue chip Mutual Fund. One time, she slipped and said something about only the one investment paying current income. I took that to mean that the other half was some sort of long term investment, I should have asked.

"I have been talking to your Mom. She said she divested a portion of her long term investment to recover the principal. Any remaining gains will remain in the investment."

"Did she say what it was?"

"Sure, why wouldn't she?"

"I don't even know!"

"I won't violate a confidence, Dan. You'll have to ask her. The money I had saved up before moving to Missouri was invested similarly. And don't think I'll tell you what it is. I'm holding, not selling."

"Well, she bought that Fort Knox gun safe, the big one. Maybe she bought some investment grade rifles."

“A half of a million worth?”

“Is that what she got? A Million! Wow!”

“Yes, the attorney’s fees were separate from her part of the settlement.”

So what could she have bought in early 2000 that caused her to sell just enough to recover the half million? It sure couldn’t be guns for two reasons. A half million dollars’ worth of guns wouldn’t fit in the gun safe and Sara owned some too, just not as much. I didn’t stop and think about what Sara’s father did for a living, it would have been a dead giveaway. He worked for Clean Financial and was a spread specialist. Most attorney fees are standard: 25% for settlement, 33% for trial and higher percentages or fixed fees for appeals. It suggested to me that the settlement was on the order of 1½ million including fees.

I also had my suspicions based on the timing of the events. Back when I was in college, gold was around \$275 an ounce. Recently, it was \$990 an ounce. If she had gold, she could have sold about 500 ounces and recovered her investment and still had about 1,300 ounces. I was thinking in round numbers because of the premiums and discounts involved in trading gold. Whatever; if it was gold, it was a lot of gold.

Sara and I didn’t have a prenuptial agreement, just an understanding that what each of us had before our marriage belonged to us individually. She hadn’t worked outside the home after we’d married, but what I earned was joint income. Perhaps that’s one of the reasons she humored my preps. Still, there was that comfort factor of not needing to go to Springfield.

A couple of times each year, we’d hook up a trailer, get Mom to watch the kids and drive up to Independence and shop at Costco. There were certain things we liked to get from Costco and we’d fill the trailer from the Independence location and the back of the pickup from the Kansas City location. Since there were two Sam’s Clubs in Springfield, we’d sometimes do the same thing with them. We seldom ‘grocery shopped’ any longer.

“Dan, could you do me a favor?”

“Sure Mom, what can I do for you?”

“You know that Fort Knox gun safe I have?”

“Yeah, what about it?”

“Could you move it to your bomb shelter?”

“It’s a storm shelter Mom.”

“Right and I am your aunt Myrtle.” (I don’t have an Aunt Myrtle)

“So what’s in the safe?”

“Your father’s guns and other valuables. They don’t weight much, maybe 120 pounds or less altogether.”

“Ok, I’ll move it with one condition. You have to leave me a sealed envelope with instructions how to get into the safe if something happens to you. I didn’t know that Dad had any guns.”

“He bought three the year he was killed. An Austrian STG-58, a Mossberg 590A1 and a Springfield Armory GI model high capacity .45.”

“Did he buy any ammo, by chance?”

“All kinds, why?”

“It’s hard to get these days, new or surplus.”

“He got some German surplus for the rifle, bought Remington buckshot and slugs for the shotgun and Speer ammo for the pistol, two different kinds.”

“A lot?”

“How much is a lot?”

“My definition would be more than 1,000 rounds of pistol or shotgun ammo or more than 5,000 rounds of rifle ammo.”

“Yes, double that or more. You can move the ammo too since the guns will be in the safe.”

“Don’t get me wrong, Mom, but if there are weapons in there, I’ll need access.”

“I’ll give you the combination paper that came with the safe. Since you’re going to be in there anyway, there’re about 1,300 ounces of gold coins divided among tenths, quarter, half and full ounce coins.”

“I won’t touch it, I promise.”

“If anything does happen to me, you’d better. The estate tax will eat up a lot of it. Let them tax the Mutual Fund but not the gold. There are 300 ounces each of the partial denominations and about 400 in one ounce.”

“I built you your own room in the shelter, you know. And since you might change your mind and get married, I put in a Queen sized bedroom suite.”

“Never happen, but thanks for the place. I’ll be content to help care for my grandbabies. Tell me something, why did you major in History? That’s a totally useless degree.”

“Ok, I’ll tell you why, *those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*”

“Admirable, if you could do anything about it, but you can’t, you’re only one person. I think that the best you can hope for is what you’ve already done to protect you family against unforeseeable events. I don’t trust half of the nuclear powers not to start a war. We made it through the Cold War, somehow. There were fewer players than there are now. I wouldn’t trust North Korea or Iran as far as I could spit into the wind. Maybe that Chavez has nukes too, it wouldn’t surprise me.”

“There are things that the shelter that can be used for other than a nuclear war. It’s about the best tornado shelter in the area, if I do say so. We’re on the other side of the state from the New Madrid Fault Zone, but it would even stand up to that much shaking.”

“But you’re worried about more than a tornado or earthquake, aren’t you?”

“Can’t slip much past you, can I? Not only am I concerned about the possibility of a nuclear war, I’m concerned about our country. It seems like every day we take another step toward socialism. The new President is spending us into an unrecoverable pile of debt. This new national healthcare plan will bankrupt the country. What happens if China calls our debt? Fix up a suitcase of things you’d like to store in the shelter and I ask Sara to put them in your dresser. I’ll put the gun safe in your room, too. I’ll clean and lube Dad’s guns; I assume you haven’t done that.”

“Once, when I added the metals and a second time when I took them out to take to Kansas City.”

“I’ll check them anyway. I’ve never handled a FAL.”

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The rifle was the Austrian STG-58 from DSA, full stock, not the Paratrooper model. There were maybe 30 magazines for the rifle and 8 extra pistol magazines. Dad didn’t have a hunting length barrel for the shotgun, just 3” shotgun shells including slugs, 00 and #4 buck. He also had 10,000 rounds of DAG 7.62×51mm FMJ, 1,950 of 230gr Speer FMJ and 1,000 rounds of Speer 230gr Gold Dot. She’d forgotten about the Marlin 39A in the hall closet. When I saw the bricks of .22LR, I checked and it was in its sleeve.

Sure glad the shelter was above ground, the safe was heavy, even after I emptied out the firearms and bags containing the rolls of coins. Could have used a truck with a lift but money was getting tight so I did it the hard way, using an appliance dolly. It was ok



until I tried getting it over the lip of the blast door. Had to build a little ramp and ease into it.

“Where the safe come from?”

“Mom’s. It’s where she stored her valuables and Dad’s guns. She asked me to put it in the shelter.”

“Did she tell you what was in it?”

“I emptied it. But, I’d already guessed. The precious metals weigh about 90 pounds and the guns about 30 pounds. The ammo Dad bought was more than we have.”

“She didn’t have any silver coins?”

“No, why?”

“Daddy knew about the change over from 90% silver coins to 40% silver coins before it happened. He went to the bank and bought \$2,000 face value each of new uncirculated dimes, quarters and halves. He sold me one bag of each at face value. He also picked up some gold coins when it became legal and sold them to me for what he paid for them. I couldn’t pick up the silver bags and we divided the 3 bags into 6. He had a lot of gold because of his business that he bought cheap. Again, he sold it to me for his purchase price.”

“I should have known he’s a gold spread specialist.”

“I don’t have a lot, except for the silver coins. Last I heard they were worth about 9 times face.”

“You did better than Mom; she bought around \$275 and sold at \$990. She only bought gold.”

“What prompted her to start putting things in the shelter?”

“I didn’t ask. I suspect that she wants to sell that house and move in with us. She said something about being content to help care for her grandbabies.”

Strictly speaking, in terms of dollars, Mom did better than Sara. Conversely, Sara’s investments had grown more than Mom’s because she’d held them longer, in effect, due to her father’s generosity. She was an only child and probably ‘Daddy’s Little Girl’. I have no doubt he was surprised and probably a little hurt when she went to work instead of college. Her parents were nice enough and her Mom frequently called. They came out to Springfield for the births of both babies, but he couldn’t stay long. They had talked about a summer vacation and I suggested fall when the heat and humidity was

down; maybe next year or the year after. Her Dad, James, really shook his head when he saw our storm shelter.

Mom didn't approach me about moving, she went directly to Sara. She told Sara her concerns about her health and the desire to move in with us. She'd be there to help with the garden and watch the kids. Again, Sara didn't share the conversation, beyond generalities. We got first pick of Mom's things and took a few items, oil lamps and such. She had the Mother of All Garage Sales and within a month, everything except her clothing and some family heirlooms was gone. The house was listed at a lowered price to reflect the current market.

It sold about 6 weeks after she listed it and escrow closed a month later. She put the cash in the gun safe in the shelter, which made little sense at the time. It later became apparent what she had in mind. First off, her doctor wrote her prescriptions for one year supplies of all of her meds plus a second set of prescriptions for a one month supply with 11 refills allowing her to rotate her pills. Secondly, she went through our preps and made notes. She plugged the data into Emergency Essentials new beta version food calculator and ordered the necessary supplies so we'd have a 2 year supply for 5 people.

After the food arrived and was crammed into every spare corner, she went to Springfield and bought enough baby and toddler food to keep the kids fed until they could eat processed adult food. I figured she'd run out of steam, but she was only taking a break. She took evening classes to become an EMT. Then, she took other classes and learned topics not generally taught to EMTs. After that, her doctor helped her assemble an advanced trauma first aid kit.

We were beginning to wonder if we'd somehow created a monster when she announced she was done. None of that happened overnight and we, as a country, were now far worse off. The trillions spent hadn't done the trick, yet. It was the spring of 2011 and I'd kept my job, barely; lots of repair work. I had managed to get a second 10,000 gallon fuel tank that didn't leak, reinforced it and was storing additional 10,000-gallons of the boss's #2. Sara had forgotten to take her pill and in February, Paul James was born; Paul for my Dad and James for Sara's Dad. She had her tubes tied.

We only 'owned' the 5 acres the homestead was on. Mom bought the other 35 acres giving us a  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a  $\frac{1}{4}$  section. I say 'owned' because we had 12 payments remaining. Mom paid it off and said she'd take the 12 payments instead, at no interest. This far into the loan, most of the payment was principal so it didn't make much difference except give us clear title. It had originally been a conventional 8 year loan with 20% down, but a not so hot interest rate.

I suppose that with Mom's support, Sara was becoming more convinced about the necessity of being prepared. She had a real hissy over Mom's latest acquisition and I wish Mom would have asked me first. There are ways to deal with things to avoid creating issues, as I've previous explained. Mom bought 3 Bushmaster carbines with the short

stroke piston conversion and 3 Browning Hi-Powers, "For when they were old enough," she said. She added 90 M16 magazines, 12 spare Browning magazines, 6,000 rounds of Speer 124gr FMJ and 3,000 rounds of 124gr +P Gold Dot. She found a source for M855A1 somewhere and bought 15,000 rounds. Then, since we had a .22, she bought a single shot 20-gauge with field loads and 3 police model Remington 11-87s with the same kinds and ratios of shells Dad had.

The shotguns were the 11-87 Police with 18" barrels, 7 shot extensions, synthetic stocks, Improved Cylinder chokes and Wilson Combat Ghost Ring (rear) XS (front) sights. She wouldn't say how much they cost, but I'll bet they weren't cheap. It gets better, she got 3 Ruger Vaqueros with 5½" barrels and 3 Marlin 1894s in .45 Colt. I think she did that so she only had to buy .45 Colt ammo. She bought 9 (500 round) cases of the 250gr cowboy ammo and 9 (200 round) cases of the 255gr lead round nose.

"Why didn't she ask first?"

"Sara, I'm certain as I can be that she'll leave it up to us to decide when they can learn to shoot. We can start them on the Marlin .22 and move them up to the 20-gauge single shot when they're ready. That's the way I learned. I don't know what ever happened to the 20-gauge, maybe Dad sold it or traded it in."

"Mom, what did you invest the half million you got for the gold in?"

"I didn't; not at first. Then, I took those classes and bought the remainder of the 40 acres. After that, the other 600 acres came on the market and I paid cash. And, of course, you know all about the guns and supplies. Consider it job insurance, in case you lose your job, you can farm."

"What do I know about farming?"

"You should have majored in something useful like Agriculture. Get a hired man and let him teach you how to farm. I all but stole those 600 acres, the family was desperate. It averaged out to \$750 an acre. I put the title in a Living Trust which will convert to a Residuary Trust upon my death. You'll be able to farm the land and keep the income, but title will pass to your children upon your death.

"Let me tell you some things you may not know. My father lost everything during the Great Depression when the bank went bust. Consequently, I've never trusted banks. You were not our first child, but the second. I had a problem with the first birth and the girl was stillborn. When you came along, C sections were more common (fewer mothers died) and the doctor insisted I have a C section. It is well that I did, he ended up performing a Caesarean hysterectomy consisting of a Caesarean section followed by the removal of the uterus. It was done because of intractable bleeding.

“I’ve tied up the money from the house, sale of our possessions and principal from the sale of the gold into the preparations I’ve made on our behalf. I’ve never felt whole since the hysterectomy and will never marry again. What cash I have left will be used to acquire minimal amounts of used farm equipment and some riding horses. I haven’t ridden in years, but I used to love to ride.”

I left the equipment acquisitions up to Mom. She bought some 40+ year old row crop equipment, 2 tractors, a 2 row mounted picker, three point hitch planter, pull behind combine, disk, drag, 3 wagons, a Kelly Ryan grain elevator and a square bale twine baler. All of the equipment was put in good repair before being delivered. She also found a man to work for the farm this coming year.

His name was Mac (Andrew MacDonald) and was in his early 50s. He had worked as a hired hand since high school and much preferred the older equipment. He was a widower. He knew every aspect of running a farm and raising livestock. I was planning on learning on the weekends, but around April 1<sup>st</sup>, I got the layoff notice. I got a quick education on plowing, disking, dragging and planting.

Mom shopped around and bought 6 horses, a stallion and 5 mares. She said we could geld the males born and keep the females, for later breeding. She said she’d find another stallion when she could. The horses were Arabian Barbs. We bought chickens, pullets and a few cockerels. Mac explained how we manage the chickens so we could have meat and brood hens. We bought 3 cattle, 1 yearling steer and 2 heifers. Mac recommended artificial breeding. We also bought hogs, one young unrelated boar, six gilts and 2 barrows.

The land was in relatively good condition according to the soil tests by the Extension office. They recommended a light application of anhydrous plus pesticides and herbicides. We planted 240 in corn, 80 in wheat, 80 in oats, 80 in soybeans, 40 in potatoes and kept the 40 acre alfalfa field intact. The remainder, 75 acres, was permanent pasture. We’d be on the lookout for more feeder cattle.

Man, I thought construction was hard work! This was sunup to sunset and maybe later on some days. The weather cooperated this year but we hadn’t bought herbicides, just pesticides. That meant a whole lot of cultivation. We had the storage space and would hold the crops until after the glut passed and the prices came back up. We wouldn’t be using that much for the livestock and made a deal for the potatoes with a local store. They would sell them as loose organic potatoes. Darn, I guess I should have mentioned the anhydrous and pesticide, but I ‘forgot’. Next year, we’ll use manure plus pesticides and herbicides.

The boss called about the fuel. They were going out of business and he wanted to know if I wanted to buy it.

“Two dollars a gallon and I’ll take all of it.”

“That’s \$36,000, it would have to be cash on the barrel head.”

“Can I call you back?”

“Don’t take too long.”

“Mom, I have a chance to buy the 18,000-gallons of diesel that the boss owns for \$2 a gallon, cash on the barrel head.”

“Get the cash out of the safe and if there isn’t enough, let me know. My Mutual Fund paid.”

“Thanks Mom!”

“Boss, I’ve got the cash.”

“Just mail me the check.”

“No, I mean I have the cash, Ben Franklins, 360 of them.”

“I’ll be right out.”

He was so happy; he threw in the pump and about 25-gallons of PRI-D. I doubted his creditors would see any of that cash. He’d better hurry up and spend it with inflation as high as it is. Mom just added the money she gave to me to the balance due on the property loan.

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Back in early August of 2009, 2 Russian subs were observed in international waters off the east coast of the US. One was a Bars 971 (Akula) and the second a Bars 971A (Akula II). According to Global Security, “the Akula is the quietest Russian nuclear submarine ever designed, and the low noise levels came as a surprise to Western intelligence. Russia claims the Akula is the quietest of its domestically built submarines and is fitted with acoustic countermeasure equipment. Noise reduction efforts include rafting the propulsion plant, anechoic tiles on the outside and inside of the hulls and possibly other measures such as active noise cancellation. Nonetheless, the American Improved Los Angeles class retained a decisive edge in silencing compared to the Akula I.

“The Project 971A Akula II incorporated an improved double layer silencing system for the power train. According to Russian sources, this variant had noise emissions that were roughly the level of a basic Los Angeles and that of the Improved Los Angeles at slow speeds. At medium or high speeds the Improved Los Angeles design retains an acoustic advantage according to Russian sources. The Project 971 uses advanced sound insulation techniques that may not withstand Russian service conditions, and it may actually be noisier than earlier designs using more basic quieting technologies if

poorly built or improperly maintained. The Project 971 is said by Russian sources to be at a distinct disadvantage in sensors, with a sonar suite that is roughly one-third as sensitive as the Los Angeles, able to track only two targets simultaneously (as opposed to the multiple target tracking capabilities of the American system).

“The Akula can launch a range of anti-submarine and anti-surface vessel torpedoes. The submarine has eight torpedo launch tubes, four 650 millimeter and four 533 millimeter tubes. The Improved Akula and Akula II have ten, with six 533 mm tubes. The four 650 mm tubes can be fitted with liners to provide additional 533 mm weapon launch capacity. The torpedo tubes can be used to launch mines instead of torpedoes. The Akula class carry up to twelve Granat submarine launched cruise missiles. The missiles are fired from four 533 mm torpedo launch tubes. The submarine's anti-ship missiles are the Novator SS-N-15 Starfish and the Novator SS-N-16 Stallion and an air defense capability is provided by the Strela SA-N-5/8 portable missile launcher with 18 missiles.

“The main propulsion machinery consists of a VM-5 pressure water reactor with a model OK-650 b high-density reactor core rated at 190 MW with a GT3A turbine developing 35 MW. Some sources credit Akula with two reactors, but it appears that the Akula has only one reactor, as opposed to older Russian subs, which had two. Two auxiliary diesels rated at 750 hp provide emergency power. The propulsion system drives a seven bladed fixed pitch propeller. The propulsion system provides a maximum submerged speed of 33 knots and a surface speed of 10 knots. A reserve propeller system, powered by two motors rated at 370 kw, provides a speed of 3 to 4 knots. The submarine is rated for a diving depth to 600 meters (1,968'). The submarine carries sufficient supplies for an endurance of 100 days and is operated by a complement of 73 crew.”

Thirty-three knots is about 38mph. My best guess at the time was we'd sent the SSN-21 and SSN-22 from Groton to track them. They have eight torpedo tubes and are extremely quiet. Their names were Seawolf and Connecticut. The Seawolf class was capable of an actual maximum submerged speed of 35 knots, with an actual maximum tactical (silent) speed of 20 knots, 23mph. All we would have needed for a perfect outcome was Rear-Admiral (lower half) Bart Mancuso commanding the Seawolf and Jonsey as COB. I suppose that Scott Glenn and Courtney B. Vance were busy. Don't kid yourself, life imitates fiction. Alex Baldwin sure messed up when he couldn't agree with Paramount to be Jack Ryan again over script issues.

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Wee Willie got the gals loose from the North Koreans, but the Iranians wouldn't even talk to him because his wife was of Secretary of State. Apparently it had something to do with the status of women in Muslim countries. What's his face was having one heck of a time after he'd been inaugurated and the resistance movement had been building steadily. There were no discussions concerning nuclear weapons, despite powerful sanctions. That was probably due to Iran's oil.

Part of the agreement with Mac was that we provide housing. We solved that by dividing the upstairs and adding an outside stairway. With my construction background, that was easy. Driving a tractor in a proper line was hard. Since the corn planter was an 8 row planter, we could get by. The seeder was a driller and we used it for the wheat and oats, just as we used the corn planter to put in the soybeans using different plates.

Now all of the carefully planted grain, plus 3 cuttings of baled alfalfa plus 40 acres of potatoes were harvested and stored in the air conditioned machine shed. Our yield was about 370 cwt of potatoes per acre, meaning we had about 1.5 million pounds of potatoes. It was far more than our buyer wanted and we were left scrambling because maximum storage time at 40° is about 8 months. We had roughly 15,000 100# bags of potatoes. Oops!

Mom insisted that we invite Mac for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Of course, they weren't 'seeing each other'. Somewhere along the line, she acquired a second of each of the firearms Dad had and the additional ammo. Even in the fall of 2011, it was still hard to find in quantity. I couldn't understand that, we were out of Iraq and it began to look like we'd be out of Afghanistan before Election Day next year. A troop draw down was also occurring in Korea and other places through attrition. At some point in the not too distant future, the only troops we'd have overseas were those supporting NATO. Mostly Air Force, I imagined.

Mac fit right in at the occasions, lacking children in the area. One was in San Francisco that he never talked about much and the other was a lifer in the Corps. He was currently a Gunnery Sergeant stationed at Camp Pendleton. Mac said he expected a visit from him after the first of the year. While Mac had never shot a FAL rifle, he was a quick study and pretty good shot. He even borrowed Sara's shotgun with the long barrel once and we went bird hunting. He was a good wing shot and I never got a shot off. Didn't matter, I was, at best, only fair.

He did order another barrel for the shotgun, one with a 28" barrel, 3½" chamber and some kind of adjustable choke from Mossberg. Couldn't figure it out from the catalog and he called them directly on their 800 number. I couldn't help him, our gun dealer ordered ours and they were 26", full choke with a bead sight. He didn't save anything buy buying direct, unless it was help making the selection and delivery time.

Had a late fall tornado come through the area, missed us by about 5 miles because it was further east. The winter forecast, now that I paid attention to the weather, was for cold and dry conditions. That might cut into the crops because we didn't have enough irrigation wells to water a full section. We got ready for winter by topping off the propane and diesel. Had to get Mom to buy the tank, the dealer wouldn't let us have more than the 1,100 (1,000 net) gallon because we weren't an industrial customer. She knew someone in Springfield and made one call. The next thing you know, we have a 3,300 (3,000 net) gallon tank sitting right next to the dealer provided tank. He sure didn't have any problem filling our new tank or topping off the old one.

I don't believe I've mentioned firewood. We got a cutting permit for one of the various sections for Mark Twain National Forest. Spent two days reading the instructions before we started wood cutting. They must have people whose only job is to write rules and they were different for each season. The winter of 2011-2012 they seemed to have a surplus of standing dead trees and a shortage of dead falls. We had to drop them, trim them into logs and haul the trash off. Mac suggested taking the trash home and running it through a rented wood chipper for mulch. Worked better, we kept more than we would have normally kept.

This was my first season harvesting firewood, too. We spent 2 full months on it and not only had wood for the fireplace, but some for the furnace. I had been buying coal in the past and had this year's delivery before we had enough wood to burn. We decided to burn up the coal this year and switch to wood next year. The thing is coal has about 12 times the energy as wood, pound for pound.

"Time to take that steer and hogs to be butchered."

"I had one heck of a time the past few years getting them to the locker plant."

"How did you try to haul them?"

"Put up stakes on the pickup and hauled the beef and came back for the hogs."

"That'll work for sure. Better way would be to get a farm truck."

"There's a bottom to that well you know."

"The money well?"

"Yeah. We're holding the crops for a better price and Mom is the only thing keeping our head above water."

"I know where to borrow one from a guy who owes me a favor. Add some extra fuel and he'll be happy."

"So, when are we going to sell the crops?"

"Looking at the futures, I'd say late February, early March. At least you got those potatoes moved."

"Yeah, after I cut the price to rock bottom."

"You did alright on that field, have you figured your income and expense?"

"Not yet. How much do you think?"



“Well, a nickel a pound on a million point five pounds is pretty good money.”

“You’re right, seventy-four thousand plus what I sold to the two grocery stores and what we kept to eat.”

“You should donate a few bags to some of the church charities in Springfield and take the write off on your taxes.”

“What do you think a couple of truckloads?”

“At least. Make you a popular fellow with the church crowd and you’ll be doing a good deed with a tax write off. It’d be hard to lose on that deal.”

“Unless they get the idea that we’ll be doing it every year.”

“So plant less next year like 5 acres instead of 40. Instead of trying to unload 1.5 million pounds, you only have to unload around 188 thousand. You can plant some other kinds of truck farm items, say onions or beans.”

“We have a lot of great northern and pinto beans in our LTS foods.”

“The only worry you have is to keep them from cross pollinating.”

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We had it all figured well ahead of tax time and we’d done exceptionally well. I filed estimated taxes, paid Mom a big chunk of what we owed her and had money set aside for seed, chemicals and fertilizer the coming season. Found a second stallion too, another Barb. I’d have bought a Morgan, but I couldn’t find one we could afford.

After the wood was cut to length, split and stacked, we starting working on the machinery, making repairs as needed. The two tractors were Fords, a 961 and an 861. Gave them a tune up, changed the oil and filters. The 961 was a 4 cylinder diesel fuel tractor with live PTO. They were also manufactured for gas and LP. The smaller tractor was a Ford 861, five speed with a live PTO, also a diesel and also available in gas or LP. The equipment included Kelly Ryan, New Idea, Ford and I’m not sure about the wagons. One piece of equipment has a sole purpose, the Cunningham hay crimper. You ran the alfalfa through it and it crushed the stems, letting the hay dry much faster.

With only one season under my belt and dry weather forecast, it wasn’t a calm planting and early growing season. Late spring rains save our bacon and the crops. We decided to let half of the 40 acres devoted to truck crops lie fallow and plant five acres each of small and large white beans, potatoes and onions. We determined that we could harvest beans with the combine and potatoes using a single land moldboard plow. We hired some teens to pull the onions and separate the potatoes, loading both into wag-

ons and eased onto tarps in the machine shed. We set aside 5 bags of potatoes for our use and two bags of onions. I also packed 5 pails each of the two kinds of beans.

The late rain was a God send and the prices dipped little at the end of the season. In fact, we got higher prices than the year before. The net came out about the same or a little less because of the limited the potato crop. Mac suggested next year go with 20 acres of potatoes and 5 acres each of onions, pinto beans, pink beans and red beans. We'd rotate the other crops on the same parcel, 240 in corn, 80 in wheat, 80 in oats and 80 in soybeans.

The elevator charged a lot less for horse mix if we brought in our own grain. We did our best guess and loaded the borrowed truck. It only took an hour for us to dump the load and have the feed in the box. They said this mix was fine for all of our livestock, although intended for horses. It wasn't COB.

Everything was doing well and I'd gotten through our second summer and it was time to decide who I wanted to vote for. We never discuss who we voted for to avoid conflict. I voted for the other guy, I trusted the incumbent even less than Bush. Some of his shine had worn off and there was a restive air approaching the elections.

We made a trip to Springfield and hit the Sam's Clubs plus some clothing store to buy clothes for our children. I didn't much care for billed caps and got a wide brimmed straw hat, a pair of boots and some jeans. Sara did the same, I think Mom had her talked into riding.

"I've repaid Mom for the diesel fuel and made 2 of the remaining payments, this year's and next."

"How much do we have left?"

"Enough for next year's planting season, filling the fuel tanks and a couple of thousand not committed."

"What are you saving up for now?"

"I had a new rifle in mind, but it will take some time to save up the price."

"How much is it?"

"About the price of a new car, including accessories and ammo."

"Sounds expensive, what brand?"

"McMillan."

"What caliber, as if I didn't already know?"

“.50BMG.”

“That’s the long range sniper rifle?”

“Umm.”

“Didn’t we have money left over after last season?”

“I didn’t count that. I was focused on what we did this year and we’d have had more except for buying the 2½ ton truck.”

“What about the unsold crops?”

“Didn’t count them, the chickens haven’t hatched.”

“Huh?”

“Never count your chickens until they hatch Sara. Besides, we sold a fair amount of it early because the prices didn’t drop.”

“What on the agenda?”

“I have to talk to the people who bought that million point two of potatoes and see if they’ll take half that amount another year. Mac suggested planting 20 acres next year.”

“Care to go for a ride?”

“Only if you promise not to laugh.”

“Go saddle two horses and I’ll be with you in a minute.”

When she showed up she was wearing her revolver and carrying her rifle. My rig was over her shoulder and my rifle in her other hand.

“Afraid of Indians?”

“Snakes. There’re a few copperheads around.”

“Wouldn’t the .22 Marlin be a better choice?”

“I’ll wait, go get it.”

“Next time. Until the Fort reports an Indian raiding party, I’ll stick with the .22.”

“I checked there’s only one remaining fort in Missouri, Fort Leonard Wood.”

She was serious and took off at a gallop. I trailed behind waiting for her mare to tire. Soon enough I'd caught back up.

"Sorry, I didn't realize you were serious."

"When we met, I'd have never considered carrying a firearm. After we married, I was still leery. Now, it's my American Express card."

"We'd better get you a concealed weapons permit. We're now a shall issue state."

"What's that mean?"

"If you pass the background check, he has to issue the permit. Here look, see this endorsement on my driver's license?"

"Is that all there is to it?"

"The fee is \$100 for the permit and \$50 to renew."

"Want to ride into Springfield on Monday?"

"No, we'd need to go to Marshfield, the county seat."

"How long to get it?"

"Forty-five days maximum. Then he has to issue it if your background check hasn't cleared, but can pull it if the check disqualifies you; usually one or two weeks."

"First thing Monday then."

"What are you going to carry?"

"Suggestions?"

"S&W Chief's model in .357/.38+P."

"Why?"

"Small, very compact and lightweight. A little expensive, but what's your life worth?"

"Six shot?"

"Five. At most you'd probably only get off one or two rounds, but we can add a couple of speed loaders."

“Recoil?”

“Unpleasant, especially in .357. We can get you a pistol if you prefer.”

“I have a pistol.”

“Too big, try one of the kid’s Browning’s.”

“And if I like it?”

“We’ll replace it and you can carry it.”

“How close are we to having the money for that rifle you want?”

“I have the money now; I just don’t want to use up our cash in case something comes up.”

“If you ask me, that’s penny wise and pound foolish. You’ve said yourself it’s not if, only when.”

“I’ll check into it.”

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It looked like \$9,000 with the Night Force NXS 12-42x56 scope plus the price of the McCann Night vision rail. I could skip the case for now and buy ammo instead. Hornady A-MAX Match was the preferred ammo and the preferred night vision device was the Magnum Universal Night Sight (MUNS). I had no idea where to get Mk211. Apparently, Mac checked on it. \$480 a can of 120 rounds, actually cheaper than the A-MAX and probably stolen to boot. I took it, buying 10 cans to go with the 10 cases of A-MAX. Fortunately, we didn’t need to get into the money I’d spent, somewhat at Sara’s insistence.

She liked the Browning and before we could replace it... well you know Mom’s, right? No blemishes on her record and the CCW endorsement came back in just a few days. She took the endorsement and her driver’s license and they immediately replaced it with an endorsed license. The pendulum was at the far side of its swing; astonishingly Sara was a prepper of the highest order and was carrying a firearm loaded with the 124gr Gold Dot +P.

None of the fixes tried by the government worked well. That’s not to say that they didn’t work, they did, just not well. Obama was still being challenged on his place of birth, the stock market was fluctuating wildly and the national healthcare plan was proving to a boondoggle. His popularity had slipped to just above the level Bush had before the 2008 election. There was an ongoing concern that the Secret Service wasn’t providing him the proper level of protection. It was his fault, when he wanted to go somewhere, they went, period.

He was scheduled for a campaign tour to raise his sagging numbers and while the exact details of each stop weren't known, the cities were. A careful observer could tell some of the details just by watching the behavior of the local Law Enforcement and the Secret Service advance party. Sort of like Clint Eastwood's *In the Line of Fire* without Rene Russo or John Malkovich.

JFK was killed by a white guy; Martin Luther King was killed by a white guy; Bobby Kennedy had been killed by a Palestinian. Obama was killed by a neo-conservative black man. One shot, one kill. Never mind he was using a .375 H&H magnum rifle loaded with armor piercing bullets, even a .338 Winchester magnum would have done the job. What happened next made the events of the 1965 Watts Riot, King's assassination and the Rodney King verdict seem to be walks in the park.

For some reason the shooter took to his grave, he didn't want Obama in office. Joe Biden was sworn in and he mobilized the military to put down 'several insurrections'. Before this, Obama would have probably won because the opposing candidate was Sarah Palin with Rick Santorum as her Vice Presidential running mate. They were two peas from the same pod, very conservative. For whatever reason, Democrats weren't willing to support Joe Biden as their president. He didn't even do well with the 'sympathy vote'. The military took a soft glove approach to the problem and the rioting died down.

That was, according to some, 'a real disaster'. The Republican Party regained a slim majority in the House and Senate, but not control and neither was filibuster proof. Palin approached the issues facing her slowly, not promising a chicken in every pot, etc. She tackled a few minor reforms to healthcare that both parties agreed would work. She pointed out that the steps the previous administration had taken were now taking effect and she didn't want to repeat the mistakes of previous administrations.

Both she and Santorum walked a narrow line when it came to some of the hot topics like abortion. Neither supported the government paying for it, but she wasn't going to 'buck the will of the people'. I think that meant she wanted two terms. Neither made any secret of the fact that they opposed abortion, but they did avoid the 'buzz' words like murder. They said the same thing in a different way.

The hottest topics in her first term were drilling for oil in the ANWR and off the west coast. Palin had little patience with conservationists. The Middle East had the US in a stranglehold and we need the oil, like yesterday.

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Meanwhile, back on the farm, Mac and Mom were 'seeing each other'. We hadn't had a moisture problem since I'd started farming and Mac had trained me fairly well in the period from spring of 2011 to fall of 2013. Mac's Gunnery Sergeant son never got the leave to see him or probably didn't have the money. Do you have any idea how much they pay a Gunnery Sergeant? I'm not so sure the job pays well enough. Back in 2009,

a Gunny with over 24 in made \$5,860.80 per month, \$70,329.60 per year and it's un-taxed in combat zones. I don't know about other pay and allowances.

We had increased our herds of livestock using more of our grain and hay. Once we settled on 15 acres of potatoes, 5 acres each of 3 kinds of beans and onions. We continued to rotate crops but the cost of the chemicals was becoming prohibitive. We stuck with manure and cultivating, old fashioned but truly organic. The market for organic crops was a specialty market, but it existed and the reduced output produced the same revenue due to higher prices.

Our kids were growing with Paul now in the toddler stage and getting into everything. Daniele and Bobby are more than a handful and less than a year apart. That explains why Sara went on the pill, not why it didn't work. (Again, based on a real case.) I didn't mean to slight Daniele but things were happening rapidly when she came along. I had irons in a lot of fires, as the expression goes; maybe too many. Bobby was old enough now to ride on a horse that one of us led. His legs were too short to reach the stirrups. Neither he nor Danni knew that in a few years, they'd be the proud owners of a pretty fair armory and stable of horses. Paul didn't know a gun from a broom.

Some countries around the world who weren't our friends anyway took exception to the new 'Reagan' in the White House. Putin was the first to make the comparison, It didn't take China long to jump on that bandwagon and it filled quickly with North Korea, Iran and India. Historically India bought most of its military weapons from Russia or the Soviet Union. That changed in 2009, but they were back with the Russians now that the Russians successfully launched 2 of the 3M14 Bulava missiles from a Borei class SSBN in consecutive launches, moments apart.

It was a plain and simple show of force that was met in kind with a dual launch from SSBN-732, the Alaska, with dummy warheads. The US has a long history of launching missiles to prove their continued reliability. Minuteman III missiles are generally launched from Vandenberg AFB. It went back and forth for a few weeks with both the US and Russia demonstrating their capacities. The world watched with baited breath. The displays ended and the world went back to doing whatever it is that the world does, talk mostly. Complain.

Sara and Mom were done with the canning of this year's garden harvest and we were harvesting in the fields. The new order of canning jars and lids had come from Canning Pantry as well as a second 30 quart pressure canner and the spice assortments they both liked. The students had harvested the onions and bagged them. They were now gathering up the potato harvest and spreading them out to cure in the machine shed.

It was, for all intents and purposes, just another good harvest and Mac and I would finish up in a few days. Fox News reported two Russian submarines doing a right of navigation exercise about 200 miles off the east coast, just outside of our economic zone. They also reported that we were shadowing the submarines as we had done in 2009. I didn't think much of it at the time.

The Russians still had 6 Delta IV SSBNs in service, each with 16 R29 RM single warhead missiles plus 4 of the Borei class, one more than expected, each with 16 of the 3M14 single warhead missiles. One hundred and six warheads, all about 1mT in size. Then they had their equivalent to the Minuteman III the Topol M. But, you say the Cold War ended in 1991? Hmm.

“Do we have time?”

“Time for what?”

“To drive up to KC and shop both Costco stores.”

“Mac and I aren’t done with the fields. Can you find a sitter for the kids so Mom and you can go?”

“Can I get one of those girls working on the potatoes and we’ll leave first thing in the morning?”

“How early is first thing?”

“Six am.”

“I’ll have to watch the kids until she shows up. See if you can get her to come early.”

“I’ll go talk to her.”

“Which her?”

“Shelly.”

“She’d be a good choice; she’s the oldest of a family with six kids.”

“Well, don’t expect ours to say baa.”

“Be sure you have full tanks in the pickup and are carrying.”

“Your Mom will be carrying too.”

“She’s a surprise a minute. What does she carry?”

“That GI Hi-cap .45. Haven’t you paid any attention to her purse?”

“Galco?”

“Obviously.”



“I don’t know much about purses, I don’t have anything that would go with one.”

“Careful...”

“Go talk to Shelly and I’ll fill the pickup and hookup the trailer.”

I got Mom to watch the kids for a minute or two while Sara and I each did our tasks. I didn’t mention what Sara said, but when Mom wasn’t looking, I picked up her purse; man, her back must ache. She wouldn’t have to shoot you, just clunk you in the head with the bag. The pistol weighs 40 ounces with an empty magazine. Add 14 rounds to that plus another pair of the 13 round magazines and you’re lugging a sandbag.

“Shelly said yes and will be here at 6:30 tomorrow morning.”

“Good, we’ll get the chores done and be in the fields in plenty of time. Have you ever picked up Mom’s purse? It’s darned heavy.”

“I sometimes kid her and tell her if she can’t get to the .45, just hit them with the purse.”

“That would definitely ruin someone’s day. Will you be home by supper?”

“I don’t know. I figured 3 hours up and back plus 2 hours at each location plus an hour between the two.”

“That’s nine hours.”

“Not counting traffic. We’ll probably hit the home bound commute.”

“Ten hours then, you should be home by 4:30.”

“Plus we’ll have to unload when we get back. I’ll set out a couple of jars of mixed vegetables and a jar of meat for a quick beef stew.”

“We’ll try to stop a little early and help the two of you unload.”

“Will that be a problem?”

“No, it should work out fine. We’d have the corn done and just be starting something else.”

“Why are you still using the 2 row corn picker? You just have to get the sheller out to shell the corn before you can use it.”

“We can’t justify a self-propelled combine for what we’re farming. Mac seems to like doing it this way, even if it’s old fashioned.”

“So, has he said anything about your Mom? You know, long term plans?”

“Not one peep.”

“She explained why she’s never remarried. I gave her my 2 cents and told her she would have to really look hard to find someone better than Mac.”

“I’m still trying to get used to the idea she carries a gun.”

“Get over it, I have. I’ve even accepted the idea of my babies growing up and having their own rifles, shotguns and pistols.”

“We should get 3 medium and 3 large gun belts to hold the cartridges and 3 holsters for the Vaqueros.”

“If I have time, I’ll look. Otherwise we’ll look this weekend in Springfield when we go in to stock up at both Sam’s Clubs.”

“We’re short of something?”

“You always said there are some things you can’t have too much of like bathroom tissue, coffee and so forth.”

“You go girl!”

She woke me up just as they were getting ready to go so I could be around when Shelly arrived. I asked and both had ample cash. I got my business out of the way and was just sitting down to pancakes when Shelly arrived. I told her they were still sleeping and that there was pancake batter left if she wanted breakfast. She heated the grill and poured 3 pancakes. I was done and she was nearly done when the kids started to stir. She told me to go do the chores and she’d handle the kids.

Only had two cows to milk and I hand milked them and put the milk in the cooler. I gathered the eggs while Mac fed the livestock and he was in the field by 8, spreading manure. I shoveled out the barn so we could use the loader to put it in the manure spreader and cover the entire corn field. We accumulated it and usually spread it just before fall plowing. When we had it spread, one of us would put down new bedding and the other would start plowing. I found plowing to be boring and much preferred to clean up after the livestock. I even got most of a load out of the hen house. Then I used the oat straw for bedding. We usually used the oat straw first and then the wheat straw or sold it if someone needed some. I’m sure that others did it differently, but this worked for us.

We stopped for lunch and Shelly had soup and sandwiches ready. I thought of it as a bit light, but Mac seemed satisfied. He said he’d be at a good stopping point right around 4:30 and wondered if he should come in and help unload. I told him he might just as

well and we'd have coffee before they got back. They weren't back as early as I thought they might be, but earlier than Sara thought. It was about 5:00 and she managed time to find the gun belts and holsters. Kind of looked like John Wayne or The Duke rigs you sometimes see.

Shelly watched the children while we worked to unload the trailer and pickup and put it all away. I paid her in cash out of my pocket because babysitting was a personal expense and potato hauling was a business expense paid by check. I paid her the same rate so she didn't have anything to complain about and the baby sitting was longer than working the field would have been. Shelly had started the stew from the jars I sat out at lunch time and biscuits were ready to go into the hot oven. We got the kids set up in their booster or high chairs and dug in.

"What possessed you to go to KC?"

"I read the news too."

"What? Did I miss something?"

"Those Russian subs off the coast?"

"It isn't the first time. They used to do it regularly until the Cold War ended. They resumed the patrols back in 2009. It was in the news and first reported by the New York Times."

"I thought you hated the Times."

"I do, but I check the news and ignore the editorials. Same thing goes for the Washington Post, the LA Times and the Chicago Tribune. You have links for the Boston Globe, Boston Herald and the Salem Evening News."

"I was reading another article I ran across concerning Russian SSBNs. They have that new one, the Borei class and are one ahead of their building schedule. At the moment they have 10 submarines carrying SLBMs. Their goal was to have 12 according to something Putin allegedly said in 2000. Plus they have that fast attack submarine that was in 'The Hunt for Red October', the Alfa?"

"The Alfas are all retired. Our Ohio class SSBNs and SSGNs are better than theirs, fact, not a guess. Plus we have two Seawolf class, one Jimmy Carter class and 9 Virginia class which are as quiet as the Seawolf class. Even our 688I class subs are better than theirs and we have 23 of those. Before the 'I' class, we built 9 with the vertical launch tubes and they're in active service. The last I knew, at any indication of a launch, we'd take out all of their SSBNs."

"So Dan, how many could they launch before we sank them?"

"I don't know Mom, not many."

"That's reassuring," she said, her voice dripping with sarcasm.

I didn't bring up their equivalent to our Peacekeeper, the Scalpel with 10 550kT warheads. It was supposed to be part of START II. START II was never implemented and was followed by SORT, which lacked verification protocols. However, we eliminated our Peacekeeper missiles anyway. Dumb and dumber!

And then we had that 'almost' pandemic, the swine flu. I know, everything is out of chronological sequence, but I'm writing it down after the fact, and I am still trying to describe what happened before the fact. However, sometimes the facts are confusing. The Seawolf has 8 660mm torpedo tubes and 50 Mk 48 ADCAP torpedoes. An Mk 48 ADCAP is a 533mm torpedo, the Tomahawk cruise missile is 518mm and the Harpoon is 343mm so why are the tubes 660mm? I checked every weapon the Seawolf carried and they were all 533mm (21") or smaller. Maybe we borrowed some torpedoes from the Russians. I doubt that, a torpedo was suspected of sinking the Kursk.

There was an answer; it just took forever to find it. The Seawolf submarines exceed the capabilities of the Los Angeles class boats in all respects. In addition to having twice the number of torpedo tubes (eight) the tubes are also of a larger design which allows the current Mk 48 ADCAP torpedo to "swim out" under its own power rather than launched with a blast of high pressure air. This allows the Seawolf to have a much lower launch "signature" than earlier boats. If you say so, it's fine with me. Let's just try and avoid launching any of them.

The US and Russia were the big boys on the block; have you checked Sino Defense recently? These people have been spending all of those hard earned Yankee dollars on their Navy now that the Three Gorges Dam is finished. Air Force too; they upgraded their air superiority fighter, the Jian 10 to the 10B, their version of the Su-27 and MiG-29. I'm not saying they can take us, but everyone gets lucky from time to time.

I decided to get the sheller out ASAP, just in case. If nothing else, we could burn the corn cobs in the furnace. Maybe I should think about getting a few tons of coal while the getting is good. We already had the firewood permit for the fall and winter and 4 drums of kerosene, several years' worth. Mom had a roll of wicking to go with those oil lamps we got from her plus spare chimneys and two extra burners. Both table lamps and wall mounted lamps with reflectors.

Made that trip to Springfield to both Sam's Clubs, seemed to me Sara was going overboard stocking up. I didn't complain for obvious reason. Let me explain. The best place to buy Charmin, paper towels and coffee, plus a few specialty items is Costco. The best place to buy pasta is Sam's Club. Some items you buy at whichever has them in stock.

We'd been married nine years now and I felt like Sara's conversion was complete. She hadn't tried cheese yet, but had a book and some supplies, mainly rennet. Ever since

Putin's comment about the new Reagan in the White House, I'd had a bad feeling. Couldn't put my finger on anything in particular, maybe it was his attitude. They'd been testing the waters; Flying Bears close in, buzzing the Nimitz, resumption of patrols of our east coast, sending a pair of TU-160 Blackjacks to visit Hugo, flights of Tu-22M Backfires. The Tu-160 was a grown up version of the B1B. Regardless, it makes one wonder.

We got everything done except the wood cutting and Mac and I started the process of dropping trees and hauling everything back to the farm. We chipped the small stuff for mulch because it took the most space. Next we cut the limbs small enough to not need splitting and eventually cut up the logs, split and stacked them. We had as much, if not more, oak than hickory. We took down 8 trees and stopped due to lack of space.

Vet was by and inseminated some of the livestock. Told Sara he'd be back in a few days/weeks for the rest. We got the farrier out, the hoofs trimmed and new shoes. Said he'd be back in 6-7 weeks just to check. Horses were just beginning to get their winter coats and Mac said to let them be until spring when they shed.

Mom got a diamond for Christmas of 2013 and she moved her things upstairs. I figured it was none of my business and I really like Mac. Sara obviously approved. Time is passing us by, Danni turned 7 March 23<sup>rd</sup> and Bobby 5 on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. But I'm getting a good handle on farming and spent some on getting the 2½ ton repaired and working with Mac on getting the equipment ready for the next season. Put brake jobs on my pickup and Sara's car. She got a tune-up; I got the injectors cleaned and new glow plugs with oil changes on both. I laid in a supply of oil, air and fuel filters for both vehicles. Different filters for the farm truck, but while I was at it, I bought 2 drums of 10w-40 Castrol.

Mac said the upside to using old equipment was the simplicity of the older equipment. Much of it was so easy to repair a kid could do it a high school shop. Plus most of the parts were available, either from dealers or auto supply stores. When Mom moved in with him, he traded in his 68 Chevy pickup for something more modern, an '82 Suburban with a 6.2L Detroit Diesel, 4WD (K version) and 3 speed manual transmission. It only had 2 rows of seats and a larger cargo area.

Mac had put in a chest freezer when we butchered the fryers during the summer. He got his share of vegetables from the garden, too. When fall rolled around, he took 4 hogs and 2 steers to be butchered, taking any excess our freezer wouldn't hold (at Mom's insistence). He got his share of baking hens and managed to shoot 3 turkeys, one for Thanksgiving, one for Christmas and one for his freezer.

"I thought you said you'd never remarry."

"I did. I've changed my mind, a woman's prerogative. The farm is in trust; don't worry about Mac getting the farm. You can move the gold to your gun safe if you're worried about it."

“I’m not worried about it; surprised, but not worried, we both like Mac.”

“He’s a good man, isn’t he?”

“From what I’ve seen, I agree. He’s a good teacher and a hard worker. He knows farming like nobody’s business.”

“You surprised me, you know. Who would have thought you’d preferred mucking out the barn to spreading the manure? Maybe we should get a well driller out and put in some irrigations wells. Would that help for dry years?”

“I think we’re sitting on the Ogallala aquifer.”

“That’s further west. We’re on the Springfield Plateau and it’s part of the Ozark Plateaus Aquifer System. You have the wrong name, Dan, but the right idea. We’re probably right on the edge so we’d have to determine if a driller could put in high volume wells. I’ll pay for the wells. Maybe Mac knows a good driller.”

Mac did and the guy said he’d guarantee 30gpm if he selected the locations. So, the late fall and early winter, we finished the firewood while he installed 4 wells, the proper pumps and a pair of solar panels, a charge controller and batteries for each pump. He recommended allowing the 2 solar panels to charge the batteries during the day and pump water at night. He also said that if needed, we could get a PTO driven generator to put a fast charge on the batteries if it was cloudy. Mom bought a used Winpower PTO driven generator. It was trailer mounted and rated at 50kw max, 30kw continuous.

Despite the economy, Mom’s Blue Chip Mutual Fund was doing well. They’d never failed to make a payment and it wasn’t the type of Mutual Fund where you put your money in and let it grow; it was more like an annuity. She never discussed it, maybe it was an annuity. When I asked and she said it was an open-end mutual fund.

We had some snow this winter. It wasn’t much but would add an inch of water when it melted off and sank in. It was one of those seasonal fluctuations where the northern part of the country was buried in snow and we got a small share. Sara and Mom continued to drive into Springfield once per month to keep our supplies topped off. I read the news with a weather eye and couldn’t see what Sara was seeing. They went back to Kansas City in March and loaded up on more of the things you couldn’t have too much of.

## The Unconvinced Housewife – Part 2 – During

I started counting the bags of purchased rice and homegrown beans and figured we had a lifetime supply. It's good I love chili; Sara made chili with a combination of pinto, small pink and kidney beans, a pint of homemade tomato sauce and ground beef. It and beef stew were good cold weather foods. It never got really cold, as in down around zero; it did get to below freezing and stay there for a while.

Mac and Mom went to town and got married by a judge and we only learned about it after they returned. We told them congratulations and offered to take them out for a wedding supper at a steak house to celebrate. They wanted no part of that, thanking us for the offer. They would, however join us for chili with corn bread. It only took a minute to get down 2 more plates and bowls. While we were waiting for the chili to finish cooking, Mac and I got to talking about the world situation.

“Do you have any idea why Mom and Sara are so concerned about keeping our supplies topped of?”

“You don't know?”

“If I did, I wouldn't need to ask.”

“You know how your mother-in-law keeps close touch with Sara, right?”

“Every week, rain or shine.”

“Sara's father is a gold spread specialist and they seem to know more about what's going on than the average guy, it's important to their trade. He fills in the missus and she tells Sara. Sara tells your mother and they go on another buying jag.”

“So what is it now?”

“Russia managed to complete 2 more of their Borei class SSBNs and reached their goal of having 12 SSBNs. Plus they have two more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  complete and will have us matched sub for sub by midsummer.”

“But our Ohio class have 24 missiles and they're MIRV'd.”

“True, but if they were to get off a first strike...well you know what that means.”

“It means we'd sink their 14 subs.”

“We don't monitor them as closely as we used to. Besides, it's a big ocean and the range of their missiles is such that they don't need to get close in to launch. On top of that, the Chinese have completed two more boomers. I wouldn't put it past the two countries to come up with some kind of pact to attack the US. The Chinese really took a

beating on buying our debt. Of course, once the attacks had been launched, they'd probably turn on each other. Iran would nuke Israel, Israel would retaliate and most likely, India and Pakistan would go at it."

"You've been reading too much Patriot Fiction."

"Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not out to get you."

"Definitely too much."

"Just for the sake of argument, when would you attack the US?"

"I wouldn't be that stupid. However, for sake of argument, around dawn where most people are asleep or tired from being up all night."

"And, if an attack came at, say, 1am?"

"Well, most people would be asleep and without any advance warning people not have the NWS weather radio turned on, the TV would be turned off, so no warning."

"And?"

"Well, I'd better keep my NWS radio plugged in and on. Maybe get that AMP-200 we talked about but never got. Approved Gas Masks, probably needs some money about now."

"Don't bother with Approved Gas Masks, your mother has us covered. You might get that other thing you mentioned. She even got her doctor to write a script for Prussian Blue."

"What's that?"

"Prussian blue's ability to incorporate cations that have one unit of positive charge makes it useful as a sequestering agent for certain heavy-metals ions. Pharmaceutical-grade Prussian blue in particular is used for patients who have ingested thallium or radioactive cesium. According to the IAEA, an adult male can eat at least 10 grams of Prussian blue per day without any serious harm. The FDA has determined that the '500 mg Prussian blue capsules, when manufactured under the conditions of an approved New Drug Application (NDA), can be found safe and effective therapy' in certain poisoning cases. Radiogardase (Prussian blue insoluble capsules) is a commercial product for the removal of cesium-137 from the bloodstream."

"And, she got that?"

"As a precaution."



"I have several bottles of  $KIO_3$ ."

"Same idea, different radioactive elements."

"I've read some of those stories too. Can you imagine trying to scrape off 3" of top soil?"

"One inch would be enough. I've read the stories, but have done some research on my own. I have some pdf files that may interest you should the time come."

"Chili's ready."

"We'll be there as soon as we wash up."

I washed my hands and turned on both of our NWS SAME radios before I reported to the kitchen table. The chili was especially good; maybe she added extra chili powder. After supper, Mac and Mom went upstairs and I helped Sara do the dishes. It gave me an opportunity to ask a few questions.

"So, your source of information about what's going on is your mother?"

"Indirectly from Daddy."

"And, what does Daddy say?"

"Watch your six and keep your powder dry. He's concerned because of the Russian boomers. The first Borei class was a project 935 sub that was started around 1996. It was later changed to a project 955 sub and commissioned in 2008. They advanced their building and have managed to launch 6 with two more nearly completed putting them 4 to 6 years ahead of schedule. Usually they run 4 to 6 years behind schedule."

"Are you aware of some of the preps Mom has made?"

"Like what, the Prussian Blue and gas masks, suits, etc.?"

"Among other things. I told Mac maybe we'd better get that AMP-200."

"I already got it and had the equipment from KI4U recalibrated. I added a few things while I was at it, like the low range 200mR dosimeters from Arrow Tech Inc."

"I've created a monster!"

"Nope; just a totally convinced housewife."

"Just how much food do we have stored?"

“About 10 years’ worth of LTS foods and one year of items that won’t store beyond a year. You stopped getting those 5 gallon pails and I picked up where you left off. Bought those 50 pound bags of Jasmine rice from Costco and stored it in sealed bags in the pails with oxygen absorbers. Did the same with every crop of beans you’ve grown, usually 3 pails of each variety. Couldn’t make potato flakes so I bought those, super pails of potato buds from Walton Feed, again 3 a year. Don’t have much beyond the original LTS packages from Emergency Essentials though, a two year supply for five.”

“Wow.”

“And, she cooks too?”

“Dropped good pups for a while.”

“Make up your mind, are they goats or dogs?”

“They’re our children.”

“That’s better. I know we can’t have any more, but we could practice so we remember how.”

“Have to wait until the kids are down. Do we have ten years’ worth of everything?”

“No, I figured we’d end up salvaging fuel and another generator. It would be hard to farm with a herd of riding horses. We should think about a berm for the barn to protect the livestock.”

The next day I mentioned Sara’s suggestion about the berm to Mac. He suggested it would take a lot of soil and we’d need a way to hold the soil in place for maximum effectiveness. Could I build a block wall around the barn leaving 3’ to fill with earth that would reach to the roof level? If I could, did I think the roof would support 3’ of earth piled on top? It would, he said, provide a protection factor of maybe 10,000, 1,000 from the soil and 10 from the block. The roof would need the rafters doubled up. I sat down and began to calculate the amount of block needed. It was a lot. We had a very good last year and the money was in the bank.

So, in the middle of winter, we rented a trencher and dug the footings. We mixed concrete and put it in the trench and set the first block. We went all the way around and then really began to lay block, from after the chores were done until bedtime. I was ready to collapse from exhaustion, but while the block wall was finished, we hadn’t added the soil yet.

We stopped for spring planting and then I began ordering a soil by the dump truck load. Each load was moved in between the wall and the barn and tamped down. The barn was protected just before harvest time. We added extra beams to be sure the barn roof

would support the load and didn't tamp the roof cover quite as much because there was hay between the roof and the animals.

The New York Times had another mention of unidentified Russian submarines off our east coast and suspected Chinese subs off our west coast, both in international waters. We got the harvest done and the crops sold well before Thanksgiving at very good prices; there were food shortages everywhere. Mom and Sara went to KC, taking the children with them, during the harvest and restocked. Next they hit Sam's. I looked, some of the oldest coffee was dated in 2004. We generally only drank 2 cans a month and since we'd married, we'd been buying 2 cases of 12 cans at each location in KC twice a year. So, over the course of our eleven years of wedded bliss, we'd accumulated one can for every can we used.

So, it's around Thanksgiving of 2015 with Sarah in her third year in office mostly making the Russians, Chinese, Iranians and North Korean mad with her policies. She's managed to make two Supreme Court appointments that squeaked through the Senate when the Republicans started saying, "Shame, shame." I'm finally beginning to feel like Custer must have felt at Little Big Horn when he was surrounded; Russians on one side, Chinese on the other. Mom goes to a horse auction and comes home with 6 Percherons, all mares. They were gray with dapples. She has someone with a stallion to service the mares and they will all be serviced as soon as possible. Our children loved the big horses; all three could ride the same horse at once, bareback.

I finally learned why she spent money like a sailor on shore leave, inflation. If there was something she wanted, she bought it the minute the money came from the Mutual Fund so she got the most bang for the buck. She still had the gold and it was around \$1,100. Mac and she 'were ecstatic', she said, describing their marriage. I had continued the habit of keeping the NWS SAME radios on 24/7. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas of 2015, it finally paid off.

"What's that sound?"

"Uh, I'm not sure; let me turn the lights on. Oh, oh, it's the SAME radio. You'd better go wake Mom and Mac and I start getting the children dressed. Wait, they saying something..."

*...declared an Air Defense Emergency. Everyone is advised to take shelter...*

"Missiles?"

"You bet your sweet bippy."

"I'll do the kids, you tell your Mom."

"Tell me what?"

“You heard?”

“Of course. Mac is emptying our refrigerator into the shelter and I’ll start on yours. Help her get the kids dressed Dan.”

At the moment we were still on grid power, but that didn’t last long and the generator kicked in, leaving us in darkness for a few moments. She had Paul dressed and his go bag of clothes. I told Bobby to get dressed in a hurry and take his go pack to the shelter and wait there. As soon as Danni was ready, I sent her to the shelter. Next I rushed to the barn and moved the hay bales in front of the doors, using plastic like Percy did.

By now, there were flashes in the distance. They were very bright and pretty far away. First came the one from the NNW, KC, then the one from the NE, St. Louis, and finally the WSW, Oklahoma City or Tulsa. We buttoned up, connected the various probes to their meters and I checked the hour meter on the generator. I’d have to change the oil after a few days but the room held oil and filters. Sara and I went back out and got the firearms from our gun safe in our bedroom to transfer them to Mom’s gun safe. We had no sooner dropped the guns on Mom’s bed than Sara turned on her heel and headed back out with me trailing behind.

“We forgot our clothes bags and I want a few of the open cans from the pantry. You get the clothes and bring them here while I pack a box.”

A few hell, two full boxes! I carried the boxes and she carried the clothes. It’s just a good thing we didn’t have far too go. I wasn’t sure whether to lock the shelter down or not and she made the decision for me, locking it as soon as I entered. The kids were asleep on their feet and she put them down to finish their sleep. Mom made a pot of Navy coffee. We were exhausted but wide awake.

I didn’t bother pulling out the Kenwood and instead added the Motorola business radios and CB radios to the cabinet. They were all mounted on slide mounts and Mac had pulled them and left them on the desk. I had never bothered with those FRS radios because they weren’t worth a crap in hilly country. The tractor radios were never stored on the tractors, pulled at night and added in the morning.

I watched the level on the meters and the wind speed and direction. The wind speed averaged 10mph and was from the WSW. We got our first hint of radiation about 16 hours into our shelter stay. Tulsa.

“Who has had a nap? The fallout has started and someone needs to monitor it. I’m beat and need some sleep.”

“I’ll do it,” Mac said. “We’re going to have to check on the livestock in two days, they’ll be out of food. The radiation will only be one one-hundredth.”

“Right, one one-hundredth of what it was at the blast site at 49 hours. But, 49 hours after we first received radiation will be 65 hours after the burst and it will be around 20 Rads.”

“How do you figure?”

“The typical radiation level at the point of detonation is 3,000 Rads. Our peak level should reach about 120 Rads if I’m right because of the 16 hour delay. Since the barn is protected, we won’t be out in the 20 Rads for more than a few minutes altogether. If you’re right on the barn’s protection factor, we shouldn’t get much exposure inside. We’ll discuss it when I get up.”

I worked the problem in my head for a minute or two before I fell off. Assuming a 20 Rad level, if we spent 6 minutes on our way from the shelter to the barn and moving the bales, we’d get 2R. The return trip would be another 2R. Inside the barn would only be 2mR per hour and wouldn’t matter.

“I figure 4 Rads the first time out and lesser amounts after that if we can limit the trips to twice a week. Maximum dosage is 300 Rem in 120 days, so we should be ok. The radiation level used to be measured in Rads and the Röntgen equivalent man or Rem is equal to 1.07185 Röntgens. How long can we wait to go out Mac?”

“Three days maximum.”

“That would be 88 hours after the detonation and the radiation should be down to 15R. Ok, we’ll do that. I wouldn’t do it often, but one time shouldn’t hurt.”

I was mostly thinking on my feet and guessing. But I figure roughly 7.5R after another 72 hours or 0.750mR and 4.75R 72 hours later or 0.475mR. Plus we had the suits, masks, gloves, boots and the pills. Blue poop probably wouldn’t be necessary due to the masks. But, when you have meters, you don’t have to guess. What you end up doing is taking calculated risks.

I caught Sara with tears streaming down her face and immediately knew what she was thinking about, her parents. They lived in Westchester County these days; a high rent neighborhood. They’d moved to White Plains about the time Sara moved to Missouri. I think James said something about taking the train to and from work. Since they were only an hour ahead of us, he should have still been at home during the early morning of the attack. I wasn’t quite sure how to approach the subject and asked Mom. She handled it skillfully, reassuring Sara that they probably came through ok and were probably equally worried about her. Sara then said something I didn’t expect.

“Mom said Daddy was really impressed with our shelter. He shopped around and bought one from Utah Shelter Systems. He even added some extras, a buried propane tank and a 10kw generator. He was so opposed to firearms; I wonder what he said when Mom gave him the firearms she bought for him.”

“What did she buy?”

“An 870 combo, an M1A and a M1911. The pistol is in her name and she took the firearms safety course and test to get the purchase permit. It’s an on premises only permit so the pistol can’t leave their property. She asked me what to get for ammo and I told her about Speer for the handgun, Remington for the shotgun and military surplus for the rifle.”

“What’s that stupid law they have?”

“The Sullivan Act.”

“If they have a shelter, I assume it’s stocked. She’s got the firearms and they have a means to defend themselves. What do they have for supplies?”

“She bought from Emergency Essentials based on my recommendation. She bought two of the one year Ultimate Supply of Freeze Dried and Dehydrated Foods.”

“Ok, radiation equipment?”

“She bought from Arrow Tech. Don’t know what she got, except she said it was enough.”

“So, if we don’t hear from them, we’ll go looking.”

“Riding a horse?”

“No. I’ll be driving my pickup with the pre-electronic diesel engine and 3,000 miles of cruise range. We can add 4 drums of diesel and more than double the cruising range.”

“But only after the radiation dies down.”

“I don’t want to glow in the dark, so I’ll wait. Might ask Mac to ride shotgun with me.”

“Yeah, using your Tac-50 shotgun.”

“Only if we can’t come up with something larger. I’d say 66mm would be ideal, but we could settle for 40mm. Besides, it would be on the way.”

“The Fort?”

“The Fort.”

It was getting the cart in front of the horse, but it gave her hope. I thought that just the fact that her parents were prepared should have given her hope. I didn’t know how

much her father was opposed to firearms. Not so her mother, she had gone through all the hoops to get a handgun in New York State, no mean feat. Sara knew this about her father and didn't explain.

Much to my chagrin, I was right about that spreadsheet. If you plugged in 3,000 and made allowance for the passage of time, it worked the way it was supposed to work. We didn't do any spring planting. We went out twice a week to care for the livestock and had to help with the births. We also had to bury a few animals that for one reason or another didn't make it. Left to their own devices, the chickens did well getting fat on the handfuls of grain we tossed. We weren't getting any eggs, but we didn't need eggs. Got a lot of chicks though. Had 6 more Percherons, 3 colts and 3 fillies. We might keep one of the colts intact, depending on the breeder with the stallion.

We also had more riding horses, one for each mare but I didn't count them because Mac was tracking the livestock on his laptop. The sows averaged 11 surviving live births per litter. We'd eat for a long time and if she had put up 15-gallons of beans and 15-gallons of potato buds each year, together with the rice, etc. we'd eat well for only God knows how long. Our immediate problem would be keeping the livestock fed.

After the radiation level fell to 94mR, we ventured forth on a daily basis, still sleeping in the shelter. The animals wanted out of the barn so badly we made washing down the permanent pasture our first order of business. Only then would we let them out. I read the papers on Mac's laptop and they were, at best, speculative and not particularly informative. We risked a trip to Springfield and purchased a high volume pump and fire hoses. The guy actually took FRNs for his inflated price for the pump, hose and nozzle. We robbed him blind; he still had faith in the FRNs.

It took a little over 2 weeks before we decided the pasture was as clean as we could get it. We'd feed the milk to the hogs and the children would have to stay on the instant. We rented a road grader and skimmed an inch of soil off the fields and deposited it in a nearby abandoned quarry. The field were then plowed and disked before winter hit with a vengeance.

Around 50mR, we moved from the shelter back to the house. Sara had been right about our salvaging diesel fuel, but we paid gold for the QD 12.5, our backup, installed with a synchronizer by a Cummins specialist from Springfield. We also got two rebuild kits, all they had. Springfield had an initial death toll of about 40% due to direct effects of the radiation. Another 20% would die in the coming days because of lingering radiation poisoning or the lack of medicine. On top of that, food shortages and the cold would claim another 15% the first winter, dropping the population by a total of 75%.

Because we'd spent most of 2016 in the shelter and the remainder of the time before the snow flew cleaning up, it was a short year for outside work but a very long year otherwise. Sara and Mom had planned ahead and when the children needed larger clothes, they pulled out the next larger size pairs of jeans and shirts. They even had an assortment of cold weather gear and each child got new underwear. It meant hand me

downs started with Danni and worked their way through Bobby to Paul, but they grew so fast, it didn't really matter; they were outgrown before they were worn out. Girls can wear 'boy's' clothes but not vice versa.

There were untold rolls of cloth, thread and patterns and should Danni, Sara or Mom need a new dress, Mom or Sara could make it. They could even use the leftover pieces to make a quilt. The subject of her parents never came up again and Mom and Sara worked on a quilt the winter of 16-17. Mac and I hauled beef and pork to be butchered, cut and wrapped. I got 95¢ for the hogs and \$1.15 for the beef we sold to the butcher (price per pound, live weight).

We took in corn and oats after the sheller was out and got two truckloads of horse mix. I learned that they were adding barley and the feed was called COB. I think I mentioned we used it for all the livestock. We had so much hay accumulated, we had one of those open pole barns covering the extra hay putting us way ahead of the curve. Yep, *Planning Pays Off...* I read that in a story I think.

Mom produced the textbooks she'd bought used and the kids were home schooled during the mornings. Mom and Sara worked hard to make it a fun time. They managed to teach Bobby and Danni the alphabet and the numbers 0-9. It would be good practice for when Paul was older. They didn't have answers for some of the questions, like what happened and why did we have a war.

I'm not sure I know why we had a war. About the only thing that came to mind was the Chinese taking it on the chin over the US debt they owned and somehow sucking Russia into backing their play. I doubt that, Russia had its own agenda. From what I could tell from the radio, we hit back with at least double what they hit us with. It only hurt the Chinese marginally, because there was something like 1.4 billion Chinese. Russia had a civil defense program and could shelter a fair portion of its population.

They lost all of their boomers to us losing two. We also lost the George Washington Carrier Strike Group but the Ford was finished so we could spare the one group of vessels. What we couldn't spare were the personnel.

We stayed home that winter and made plans for spring planting. Any trip to White Plains would have to wait until after harvest. We knew that both Palin and Santorum had made it through the attacks. One was at Cheyenne Mountain and one at an undisclosed location. They were doing their best to get things organized; it was slow going. We got monthly reports on the NWS SAME radio and it helped some.

This 'during' part of my tale covers just before the missiles flew through when things began to get a bit more normal. It covers maybe 5-6 years. Don't think normal in the sense we usually use it. Thing in terms of when the banditry ended and the government was back in control, however good or bad that was.



The spring was late and Mac and I worked very long hours getting the crops in. I was almost totally certain that our most important crops this year would be the potatoes and beans. Some of the corn would probably end up being ground into corn meal, the wheat into flour and the oats rolled or ground. Other than the hay, our crops were dual purpose crops that could be used for human or animal consumption. And don't forget, they were all organic. Organic crops are sorta like mushrooms, keep 'em in the dark and feed 'em manure.

We had two years of field seed stored, one year hybrid and the second year heirloom. All of the garden Mom and Sara planted had been heirloom for several years now, carefully selected and stored in seal a meal bags. We grew what we liked, not what was popular. Since the potatoes, onions and beans were field crops and they canned field corn rather than sweet corn, the large garden produced a real bounty of food including several varieties of squash, melons, green beans, peppers, tomatoes, beets, green onions, cucumbers for pickles, etc.

Nearly all of the trips to Costco and Sam's Club were for items like coffee, bath tissue, paper towels, Kleenex, feminine hygiene, yeast, sugar, shortening, certain canned goods we didn't put up like soups, pastas and prepared meats. The prepared meats included tuna, chicken and beef plus extra cure 81 hams, usually half hams that were frozen, and thick sliced bacon; a lot of bacon, to be sure.

TSHTF big time; but was it TEOTWAWKI or TEOCAWKI? Only time would tell, but those monthly broadcasts on the NWS SAME radio were reassuring. They came on the first day of each month, the first live and then repeat broadcasts using a tape of the original broadcast. How did I know that? We caught the first broadcast one day and she was interrupted. Later broadcasts were the same with that little segment edited out.

So far we hadn't heard the name FEMA once and considering their past record, it was probably a good thing. We did hear that the surviving military was moving out to provide what medical care they could and small amounts of food, mostly grains. While the government hadn't had any grain in their emergency stores since 2009, local elevators did and those stores were being distributed.

*Quietly, the last of the US government's wheat reserves, held in the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust, were sold in late May (2009) onto the domestic market for cash. The cash was put in a trust for food aid. With no other government wheat holdings, US government wheat stocks are now totally exhausted.*

*The Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust was established in 1980 by an act of Congress and is authorized to hold up to 4 million metric tons of wheat, corn, sorghum and rice as a reserve for global food crises. The wheat is purchased and managed by the Commodity Credit Corporation and included in the total amount of wheat owned and held by the US government. Holdings by the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust for corn, sorghum and rice are also zero.*

We never heard if they replaced the wheat or added corn, sorghum or rice, so I thought it safe to assume they hadn't. Obama surely wouldn't have done it while he was in office, Biden held on by the skin on his teeth and Palin and Santorum were more interested in getting the oil pumping and tidying up national health care. To put wheat back in storage would have required money the country didn't have.

We tried to be up and awake to hear the 9am broadcast the first of every month. I guessed she must have assumed that everyone had those windup radios or generators with unlimited fuel and spare parts. The time was obviously selected so it wouldn't be too late on the east coast, 10am, or too early on the west coast, 7am.

Using one of the beams and an antenna tuner, I finally got a heading for the radio signal. The heading was ~284° and using my atlas and a protractor, I drew a line. The line ran through Colorado Springs, allowing us to actually confirm that the President was in Cheyenne Mountain or at Peterson AFB, NORAD headquarters.

Did you know about this?

*Job Title: Corrections Officer – Internment/Resettlement Specialist*

*Job Description*

*As an Internment/Resettlement Specialist for the Army National Guard, you will ensure the smooth running of military confinement/correctional facility or detention/internment facility, similar to those duties conducted by civilian Corrections Officers. This will require you to know proper procedures and military law; and have the ability to think quickly in high-stress situations. Specific duties may include assisting with supervision and management operations; providing facility security; providing custody, control, supervision, and escort; and counseling individual prisoners in rehabilitative programs.*

*By joining this specialty, you will develop the skills that will prepare you for a rewarding career with law enforcement agencies or in the private security field.*

No kidding, a Monster.com ad for the National Guard back around 1Aug09. As I said, this is in no particular order; I'm just writing it down as I remember. I do my best to stay in the present and when I don't, I try to recall when something happened.

Once we completed the fall harvest we knew exactly how much food was available to sell/distribute. We paid the few high school kids we could round up to help in food. They got potatoes, onions, one bag each of corn, wheat, oats and two bags of beans. It was a lot of food, if they stretched it. It also brought out the people who had little to eat and not all of them were friendly. Actually, they were rather demanding, insisting we just give them the food. Both Mac and I told them we didn't take food stamps and if they wanted food, they'd have to trade for it. We would take anything of value to us or a barter of labor.

How is it that people who can't find a job can manage to be so well armed? We saw quite a few M16A2s, some Beretta 92FS/M9s plus an assortment of hunting rifles and shotguns. This latter group of armed people proved to be the ones willing to barter labor for food. In fact, they'd do some work now and would take the food as it was earned. Their weapons were, it seemed, for self-defense.

There wasn't that much work. There was manure to collect and spread; firewood to be harvested, coal, diesel and propane to be located. People volunteered for every task, sometimes more than one and we paid them with food. A load of diesel was worth the items I mentioned earlier for 4 people plus a quarter of beef and ½ hog. The same went for 6,000-gallons of propane, a truckload of coal or 5 cords of firewood.

Mom suggested we had enough food to hire a few of the people to help with our security. We discussed it for several nights before we agreed that 'a qualified guard' would have a semi-automatic 7.62x51mm main battle rifle, 12 gauge shotgun and a .45acp pistol. We didn't care what make or model of MBR; just that it was .308 NATO and he/she had spare magazines for the rifle and pistol. We had a bit of ammo if they were short.

We ended up hiring 12 people as guards. In one case it was a husband/wife team who only had one of each of the required firearms, but he took the night shift and she took the day shift. That pair worked 12 on – 12 off. I hadn't planned on going to White Plains for another year, but with the amount of labor we had, the security for the place and Mom and Mac to run the operation, Sara and I left just after Thanksgiving for New York.

We each took an M1A, .45acp, 12-gauge and my Tac-50. We stopped at the Fort and picked up some 66mm stuff and assorted hand grenades including smoke, incendiary, concussion and fragmentation. We also took what ammo we could find, the bunker was mostly empty. We only found two cans of Mk211MP and 3 cases of M118LR.

Our provisions were all Mountain House of one sort or another. Sara had packed enough food for the two of us for three months. She added the extras than make life worth living, bath tissue, the shower enclosure, coffee and etc. It was as cold as a Witch's chest and I wasn't planning on too many showers. Most of the food had been packed in the back of the cab and I had 4 drums of diesel with PRI-D and anti-gel to re-fill the tanks with 20-gallons in reserve.

A trip to Hell would have been easy by comparison, the heat would have melted the snow and ice off the roads the nearer we got. This was the opposite, with the snow and ice getting worse the further north we got and the further east we drove. I'd done my best to anticipate the weather and we mostly stayed on a more southerly route. We backed tracked so many times I lost count, avoiding radioactive cities and hot spots. What would have taken 3-5 days took almost a month with us arriving in White Plains on Christmas Day.

"Did she say where the shelter was?"

“Yes, in the backyard. Look for a fake rock. You can’t see the emergency escape tunnel, Daddy had it sodded over.”

“So, how will she know it's you?”

“Dit, dit, dit, dah.”

“V in Morse code?”

“Yes, they used that on that old TV series, *Victory at Sea* according to Mom.”

“Actually Sara, I believe that it’s also the beginning of Beethoven’s 5<sup>th</sup>.”

“That’s where I’ve heard it! *Victory at Sea* was on TV before I was born.”

“See anything out of place?”

“That rock there must be it; it wasn’t there before. See if we can find a way to lift it, Mom said it was hinged.”

“And then what?”

“There should be a blast hatch embedded in concrete.”

I took my hunting knife and worked around the edge until it started to lift, opposite where the hinges were located. I tilted it all the way up and found the hatch. I couldn’t imagine that they would still be in the shelter this long after the attacks, but Sara struck the top 3 times and then drug the tire iron across the top for the dash. We waited a minute and repeated the signal. I could hear someone inside undogging the hatch and the hatch lifting on its counter weight.

“Mom? Are you ok?”

“Can I come out now?”

“Yes, you can come out now. You could have come out a long time ago, why didn’t you?”

“That’s a very long story.”

“Where’s Daddy?”

“In the escape tunnel in a body bag.”

“Body bag??? What happened?”

“He found out about the firearms I purchased and...well, you see, he wasn't very happy.”

“What does that have to do with anything?”

“I presume you're here to take me to Missouri?”

“Yes.”

“Ok, I tell you on the way. I need some help with the firearms, ammunition, food and my clothing.”

“You've lost a lot of weight.”

“It wasn't due to the lack of food, just loss of appetite. Dan, you go after my things and Sara and I will go into the house for my other things.”

“Ok Alice.”

I found the firearms all lain out on a bunk with the ammunition stacked on a second bunk. The food was stacked on yet another bunk and her clothing on a fourth. There was one of those optional block and tackle rigs Utah Shelter Systems sell and I used it to lift everything up to ground level and then climb the ladder and push it onto the concrete. I packed her clothing into the suitcase she must have used to bring it down and within 45 minutes had everything she wanted out of the shelter.

“Here,” she said. “Flip that hasp up and lock it with this lock.”

“Are we ready to go?”

“No, you're going to get a hot shower. There's a small electric hot water heater and a generator to power it. I've had mine and have clothes out for you. Mom and I will fix something to eat; we'll use the bathroom and then take off.”

“Did she say anything more about your father?”

“Just that it would take a lot of explaining and she do that once we were on the way home.”

I thought about it while I showered, shaved, dressed and ate the meal they fixed. It was a tuna noodle casserole prepared using the generator powered electric stove. I was still thinking about it when I used the bathroom, unhooked the generator and put it and 10 5-gallon cans of stabilized gasoline in the back of the pickup. Alice remained silent, not her usual mode. She didn't begin to speak until we were in Pennsylvania putting up for the night.

“Sara, your father always hated firearms. He said it was because a friend of his in grade school was shot and killed, but never explained beyond that. I bought the firearms I thought necessary in the event something like what happened actually happened. They and the ammunition were stored under the floor of the shelter and I never mentioned them, not once.

“When it became clear that the country was under attack and we were safely in the shelter, he became concerned for our safety. It seemed like the appropriate time and I got the firearms from under the floor. He went through the roof! I guess I should have gotten a bow and some arrows. But part of it, I think, was because I’d done it without his knowledge. It wouldn’t have been the same if he’d done it himself.

“He was like a man possessed. He berated me nearly every waking moment. After a few weeks, something came over him and he got more physical, sometimes slapping me around. It was just so uncharacteristic; I think he was out of his head. When he moved up from slaps to fists, I decided I had no choice except to protect myself. While he was sleeping, I loaded a magazine with the Gold Dot and chambered a round. I vowed that the next time he raised a fist to me, I’d shoot him.”

She paused, then, lost in thought. Sara broke the silence with, “Well, what happened then?”

“First, he took a hammer to all the radiation equipment and the radio. When it appeared he was coming for me, I lifted the pistol and pulled the trigger. That stuff is powerful, it left a tiny hole going in and a bulge in his spine where it must have wanted to come out. He was as dead as a doornail. I just put on the safety and threw the pistol on the bed. But, before long, I had to get him in a body bag and drag it to the escape tunnel. I pulled him all the way to where it turned to go up and poked the sand with a shovel, burying him in sand.

“Since the radiation detection equipment was all destroyed and I had enough food for two years, I just stayed in the shelter and hoped you would show up. If you hadn’t, I would have only left when I ran out of food. I don’t know how long that might have been due to my loss of appetite.”

“Sara, that squares with what I saw getting everything from the shelter. I didn’t go check on your father, but the M1911 was just as she described, cocked and locked with two rounds missing from the magazine. There was a very small amount of residue in the barrel.”

“Will that be a problem?”

“There was no corrosion, I’ll run a bore snake through the barrel and wipe down the action. It will only take a few minutes. I also want to load the remainder of her magazines and get the shotgun set up with buckshot.”

“Mom, I’m so sorry. I knew that Daddy didn’t like firearms in the house but it was never explained why and I think maybe the attack pushed him over some edge.”

“I do know one thing Sara; he wasn’t the man I thought I married. We were safe down there and had supplies for a year or more. Is everything ok in Missouri?”

“Yes. We had to shelter for nine months and we couldn’t plant the first year. We had a fair crop this year and using primarily food as a means of barter even hired some people to provide security at the farm. You do remember me saying that Dan’s mother bought the remainder of the section in two separate purchases, don’t you? Anyway, we’ve been growing corn, wheat, oats and soybeans plus potatoes, onions and three kinds of edible beans for a while now. And, it’s all organic.”

Alice got quiet, apparently lost in thought. We didn’t press her; she’d have to come to terms with what had happened in her own time. Returning was better than the trip up, only taking 10 days. She hadn’t met Mom and Mac hadn’t worked for the farm or been married to Mom when she and James had been to the farm. There was almost no conversation on our trip back to Missouri, Sara and I withheld our conversations to when her mother was off using a bathroom at a rest area or service station. We stayed clean with Germ-X and baby wipes since water was available only in limited amounts. On the trip up, we’d stopped more often and water was easier to find.

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When we pulled into the farm, a new guard was watching the front,

“Help you?”

“Yes, this is our farm; call Mom or Mac to come up and identify us.”

“You’re Dan?”

“That’s right and my wife Sara and her mother Alice.”

“I was told to expect you, but I suppose I’d better ask for ID.”

“Here you go, Daniel Baker.”

“I’ll radio the house and tell them that you’re home.”

“Thank you. And, your name is?”

“I’m Mac’s son from Camp Pendleton, Gunnery Sergeant John MacDonald.”

“Did your brother make it here?”

“No sir and I doubt Dad would welcome him if he did turn up. They had a falling out years ago over Ronnie’s lifestyle.”

“I noticed that Mac didn’t talk about him much. None of my business. See you at the house later?”

“Probably. We towed a 5<sup>th</sup> wheel camper when we were able to get free. Hope you don’t mind, Dad hooked us into your septic, water, propane and electricity. We’re drawing less than 20 amps, just enough for the refrigerator. Dad said even with our load the generator you have is running below full capacity.”

“No that’s fine. Will you staying for a while?”

“I hoped so, Dad and your mother, Joyce, said we were welcome and I was appointed as head of security. Did you pick up anything on your trip that I should know about?”

“Grenades and rockets.”

“AT-4?”

“M-72s. A mixture of hand grenades; you’ll have to inventory them. We also picked up some .50 caliber ammo from the Fort and have Alice’s weapons and ammo.”

“A Barrett?”

“A Tac-50 with a mix of match grade Hornady A-MAX, M1022 and Mk211MP.”

“Raid an armory?”

“Something like that. But you and I both know that the Guard doesn’t keep ammo at the Armories.”

“Right, ammo distribution points. Probably had them near KC and St. Louis but they were nuked. Where else?”

“Fort Leonard Wood.”

“You could have gotten medium and heavy machine guns there.”

“Probably. However, I’ve never used a machine gun or mortar so I didn’t bother. Looked for an M-79, but couldn’t find any and I’m not that partial to the M16s. Have three, so I suppose I could have gotten three M203s, but passed.”

“I’ve noticed that the favorite caliber is 7.62 NATO.”



“It is; we’d better go. Talk to you later John.”

“My friends call me Jack. My wife’s name is Sandy. Kids are Jack and Jill.”

“You’re kidding.”

“Thought it was cute at the time.”

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“Joyce, Mac this is my mother Alice. Mom, his is Dan’s mother Joyce and her husband, Andrew MacDonald, who goes by Mac.”

“It’s nice to finally meet you Joyce. Mac.”

“Where’s your father, Sara or should I ask?”

“It’s a long story, Joyce. I’ll let Mom explain when she’s up to it. He didn’t make it.”

“She’s just being nice Joyce, I shot and killed him.”

“Oh my. Well, I’m sure there’s a very good explanation. Right now, why don’t we get you settled into my old room, let you clean up and have some coffee with cinnamon rolls I baked this morning.”

“Mac, I see your son finally made it from Camp Pendleton with his family. That’s good news, right?”

“I about had a heart attack when Jack and Sandy pulled in. I’d all but given them up for dead. My other son worked and lived near downtown San Francisco. I’m more than sure he never knew what hit him.”

“Do we have other new hands?”

“Several. Guys from Springfield are basically taking turns working for the farm to get food put up and then passing the job on to the next fellow most in need.”

“Any problems?”

“With the guards or with outsiders?”

“Either or both?”

“Nothing serious. Had some people come out hoping to glean the fields. They were awfully disappointed to see them plowed.”

“Could we do that? Allow gleaning?”

“Can’t see the benefit, but sure, we could wait until spring to plow. Probably cut our yields some, but I can’t be certain. They won’t get much, a few bushels of each crop at most.”

“Would what they gain equal what we lose in yield?”

“I doubt that.”

“Maybe we should just give a quantity of grain and produce equal to what they might get from gleaning to the church groups to distribute and continue with fall plowing.”

“Now, that makes sense. I also believe it may prevent some of those so inclined to try and take our production by force. We aren’t the only people farming. Your mom and I hooked up with that horse breeder and stud services are available. Other farms can offer stud services for our hogs and cattle. The rural populations made out better than I expected because they all had storm shelters that doubled as cold storage.”

“Good, that stretches the pressure to share around some.”

“A few of them aren’t in the sharing mood. They seem to want top dollar in gold or silver.”

“We’re not going to do that. We will build our herds and flock as much as possible and continue to sell and barter for labor if they don’t have the means to buy.”

“You’re going to get to the point where you can’t produce enough for the herds. What then?”

“We’ll cross that bridge when we get to it. We can’t feed all the survivors in Springfield. We will do our part regardless; it’s the Christian thing to do.”

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Because the hens had all become brood hens during our shelter stay and had vastly increased our flock, we decided to separate the chickens into two flocks, the brood hens with roosters, and the new chicks as either egg layers or meat chickens (broilers). The roosters and many of the pullets ended up in the latter group. You need to think how it used to be, not how it was done now. We replaced the brood hens every other year and used them as stewing/baking hens. While modern practice was to kill most of the roosters when they were a day old, we just kept them separate, not wanting to waste the food.

Food was just about the most precious thing there was with toilet paper and coffee coming in second and third. If you had extra bath tissue, you could get \$1 per roll or more.

We didn't sell our bath tissue, but did sell some of our extra supply of Puffs. Unfortunately, we didn't have a lot of free time to do salvaging or scavenging. What free time we did have was during the winters when the roads were often blocked.

Still, we managed one or two trips per winter. This winter, we'd been to White Plains and Mom and Mac had been out lining up breeding services for the herds. We used the farm truck and made one trip down I-44 in the direction of Tulsa. We picked up one propane tanker and one diesel tanker plus a third with a mixed load of gas and diesel. Anyone with a chainsaw and gumption provided wood for their own needs and brought the remainder to us or one of the other farms. I don't know about the rest, but we paid in stabilized gas or diesel and with food. At the moment most didn't want gold or silver.

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Most of the fuel in this country is distributed via pipeline or train to distribution points. From the distribution points it's distributed by tanker truck. Natural gas is frequently compressed into LNG and stored until needed. Keep in mind that propane is sold by the gallon or pound and natural gas is sold by cubic feet. Check the information for your gas fueled generator and you'll find less kw per unit of measure for natural gas than propane.

The other advantage to propane is that you don't have to add energy to keep it liquefied like LNG sometimes requires. If you live in farming country, your only option is probably propane. Can you imagine the cost to get a pipe run to your farm? Even electricity is sometimes prohibitive.

o

We were in the fields as soon as they were dry enough to disk and drag. We continued our rotation practice, putting the manure on the field that would be next year's corn field. We had lost the alfalfa in the aftermath of the war, but the following year had bumper crops. Family wise, everyone who was a member of any family on the farm was probably here. That excluded Mac's son in San Francisco who didn't even know where Mac lived now.

Alice was slow to get beyond her guilt over shooting her husband. I suppose it was understandable but her ongoing refusal to touch a firearm since she'd come to the farm was a distraction. We used the long lane to the fields for target practice. I suppose it was about 1,000 meters or just shy of 1,100 yards. We tried to standardize on metric measurements. That would probably take a generation or two before it was totally in place.

That concrete block wall and fill around the barn, plus the soil on the roof, gave us a perfect opportunity to put up 4 sandbagged positions complete with parapets. They had several names that seemed appropriate, but were basically rifle slits. That was a week-

end project and our security force helped because it made their job safer and easier. It was amazing how far you could see from near the peak of the barn roof with binoculars.

We had to scrounge to get enough portable CB radios to go around. They were necessary under Jack's revised protection scheme. He had 2 people riding horses, making a circuit around the section and 4 on the roof with binoculars. Although the shifts were twelve hours long, that allowed a 2 on – 2 off proposition for the 12 on each shift.

Jack had also selected a former Special Forces soldier as his second in command and one of the two was always on duty. Obviously he couldn't find another Marine that he thought could do the job. There was a third man, a former Ranger, who covered for either of them as required. The Ranger had served two enlistments before leaving the service to work for what was then called Blackwater. He didn't like that job and eventually opened a private security firm in Springfield providing armed rent-a-cops. Two of his former employees were also on our security detail.

We didn't have holidays, per se, but did have events where we invited everyone who worked on the farm to attend. We provided all of the food, which sometimes took a day or so to prepare ahead of time. Imagine 60 pounds each of potato salad, macaroni salad and coleslaw. Add to that about 35 chickens, 6 or 7 large watermelons, jars of pickles, hamburger patties with homemade buns, etc. The biggest holiday was Independence Day and we made sure they had the necessary food for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Many of the former holidays had fallen by the wayside, especially Memorial Day because it was just too sad to think of everyone who'd been lost. We did still honor November 11<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, we had 6 'holidays' New Year's, Easter, Independence Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. All but two of them were observed on a specific day, the exception being Thanksgiving, the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of November and Easter Sunday.

As we began to accumulate more of some things, like meat, our fortunes improved. More and more people were willing to do services like handing the onions and potatoes, harvesting good firewood, locate and haul fuel and coal. In turn we refreshed the fuel and they took a portion and took food to cover the remainder. We were getting a large parking lot of empty vehicles which were taken and refilled by people who knew of sources of fuel. Occasionally, the fuel supplied was already refreshed with the PRI product and while they could have bartered it with anyone, we usually got first choice.

In spite of that, we could only use so much fuel, firewood and coal and when we ran out of room or food, we had to turn them down. We might be first on their list, but they did have a list. They would simply work their way down until they had what they wanted for what they had to trade.

There was one thing we never turned down, ammunition. Before the war, ammunition had been hard to find and expensive. After the war, it was about 3 times as hard to find

and everyone wanted more than it was worth. So, when someone occasionally showed up with a caliber of ammunition we could use, we got down to brass tacks and made a deal. It was as much keeping it out of the hands of the bandits as it was having it for our own use.

Keeping the ammo out of the hands of bandits was probably overrated as a reason for accumulating ammunition. We didn't reload but kept every piece of brass for some in the area who did. Several of our firearms could and did use cast lead bullets, especially the older calibers like the .45 Colt and .45-70-405.

"Alice, I'm sorry, but you're going to have to snap out of this funk you're in. We need all the help we can get to preserve what we're getting out of the garden. It's not like we have bees and are asking you to harvest the honey. Mom and Sara need help with the preparation and canning. Anyone can snap a few green beans."

"But you just don't understand."

"I understand perfectly, whether you believe so or not. Nevertheless, you're going to have to pull your weight around here. Ask yourself one question, 'Why didn't I just kill myself after I was forced to kill James?' You had a desire to live, or maybe it was against your faith. There was a reason why you chose to live. Get off the pity pot and tend to business. Is it fair that others wait on you while you sit around and feel sorry for yourself?"

"I suppose not."

"I KNOW not and so does everyone else. Besides, idle hands are the Devil's playground. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-15. *For even when we were with you, we commanded this to you: If anyone does not desire to work, neither let him eat. For we hear some are walking in a disorderly way among you, not working at all, but being busybodies. And we command such and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that working with quietness, they may eat their own bread. And you, brothers, do not lose heart in well doing. But if anyone does not obey our Word through the letter, mark that one, and do not associate with him, that he be shamed. But do not count him as one hostile, but warn him as a brother.*"

"What do I need to do?"

"Ask Mom and Sara, they'll find something to keep you occupied. Work and time will help heal the wound. So will your grandchildren; keep that in mind."

Anyone wanting home canned goods had to return the jars before we'd trade them for another jar. Those commercial spaghetti sauce jars were never intended for home canning but we could use them for other things, like pickles. Inevitably a few jars managed to get broken and we knew that a jar probably wasn't suitable after ten canning seasons.

The question became, *did we look for more jars or farm?* Didn't take much thought to decide to farm and add jars and lids to items we were willing to trade for. I'd been in construction since I graduated with my history major and farming was entirely different from framing up a building, and so forth. While we could fall back on those skills, they became secondary to the task at hand.

In order to build our herds and flock, we kept the mares, cows, gilts and traded for the servicing of the animals. With 6 Percheron mares, 3 fillies and 3 colts, Mac consulted with the breeder who suggested gelding all 3 colts and he'd do it for a nominal fee. The cross bred mares dropped 3 colts and two fillies. We had no expectations of selling any of the equines until we had large herds of both the Percherons and Barbs. In time, we hoped to build the cattle herd to 60 cows and our swine herd to 30 sows. The older cows would be great for boneless beef and we would produce as many as 660 pigs a year.

We were well into the growing season when we had our first major problem, a gang of 23 individuals attacked one night in what we later concluded was a food raid. The roving horse patrol was the first to notice them and radioed back to the observers on the barn roof. The people up there picked them up in their night vision and the word was passed. The farmstead had been the focus of Jack's efforts to put in fighting positions and Mac, Sara, Mom and I dressed quickly, armed ourselves and went to our assigned positions.

Scoped rifles were of little use in this scenario since we lacked night scopes except for my Tac-50 with the MUNS. We pulled the scopes allowing us to use the iron sights, holding our rifles and leaning our shotguns against the wall of the fighting positions. Each of us was in a different position and was joined by one of our hired guards. Because Jack had arrived when Sara and I had been on our trip, we two were unaware on one improvement Jack had made, Halogen floodlights.

The attacking force dismounted and formed into a wedge formation, moving up the road as quietly as they could. Under observation from the people on the barn using night vision, and under the watchful eye of the horse patrol following them, the group was soon well within the pattern of the floodlights. The contractor in my hole warned me to cover my eyes and be prepared to shoot immediately thereafter because the bad guys would be sitting ducks.

Leaving my rifle in the parapet, I slipped on sunglasses and shielded my eyes. A switch was thrown and nighttime became daylight. The attackers were blinded and began hitting the dirt, a bad move. Jack had pointed out that in basic training, they were taught to deal with flares and the preferred action was to freeze. It didn't matter as 10 of us opened up on 23 of them.

It lasted mere seconds with us pumping a round into one attacker and moving on to a second and then a third until they were out of commission and unable to engage. The guard force took over from there, with little charity. Defenders 23, attackers 0. By the

time I realized they were dispatching the wounded, it was over. Their vehicles were driven up to the bodies and the bodies stripped down to their underwear. The spoils went into one truck, the bodies on another. Mom and Sara left to start coffee to pass around and Mac and I just stood there and observed.

Within fifteen minutes, the task was completed and the truck with the spoils was parked behind the barn among the other trucks and one man left driving the load of bodies with another following to bring him back. They weren't gone that long and Jack said that the truck containing the bodies was being dropped off near Springfield. Mugs of hot coffee and warmed up day old cinnamon rolls were passed out to the guards.

After the experience we were up for good and hauled the collected goods to the shelter to sort through and attend to them. There was a small amount of one tenth ounce gold coins, some 90% silver, 19 handguns, 16 semi-auto magazine fed rifles and 7 short barreled shotguns. Knives ran the gauntlet from cheap Wal-Mart knives to expensive high quality knives. The LBE included ALICE, MOLLE and hunters' vests holding shotgun shells.

Despite not having gotten off a single shot, some of the firearms needed a thorough cleaning before storage. There were two knives I wouldn't mind having and Jack must have seen me eyeing them.

"Help yourself to the knives, Dan. I see you eyeing that Randall and the Cold Steel."

"Nobody minds?"

"Help yourself."

I took the Laredo Bowie and the 7" Randall model 2 fighting stiletto. The former would work with my western style gear and the latter with my military style gear. Out of the 16 rifles, only 7 were American made, 2 M1As, 2 PTR 91s and 3 STG 58s, all 7.62x51mm. I actually expected to see a Mini-14 or two, but the SKS seemed to be the most numerous.

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A few days later, we were visited by the MNG, inquiring what we knew about a group of individuals whose stripped bodies had been found near Springfield. Our head of security, Jack, talked to them and did a good job of playing dumb. By this late date, the weapons had been cleaned, oiled and stored in the large gun safe in the shelter. The Guard Sergeant commented on our extensive preparations to defend the farm. Jack explained that he was, until recently, a Gunnery Sergeant stationed at Camp Pendleton and he'd done his best to implement nominal security using hired locals.

He went on to explain that 'most' of the crops were livestock feed and we'd supplied some produce free of charge to local church groups to be distributed to the needy. That

did include some of the dual use grains. However, the garden barely produced enough for the residents and the guards who took most of their pay in salvaged fuels and food.

The Guard Sergeant wasn't convinced and wanted to check around the place looking for food. He was told to get a warrant from a Judge, if he could find one to issue the search warrant. The Sergeant then dropped the bombshell, he didn't need a warrant. A certain Executive Order gave him the authority to search and take what he wanted. Jack assumed he was bluffing and called the bluff, telling him if he could produce a copy of the EO, he could search. Sarah Palin had not activated the various EOs and had announced that fact on one of her monthly broadcasts. The EO in question was EO 10999. We had taped all of her broadcasts.

Apparently what was left of local Law Enforcement put the Sergeant in his place; or, perhaps it was the church groups. Either way, he didn't come back. I suppose one could call our crop this year average. It was enough for the growing herds, us and the guard force. We followed our usual pattern of giving some to the church groups but had to raise our prices slightly under the laws of supply and demand, 5%.

That didn't work as the demand was too great and we were forced to ration. With that came problems because our security forces were being paid in food. After the harvest, we acquired a large generator, actually a pair, of Cummins DGFC diesel generators rated at 180kw prime power, 225kVa. Our salesman this time was the installer we'd used before and he delivered them, replaced the transfer switch and connected the wiring to allow the Power Command modules to synchronize the generators. His price was food for 6 for a year and a case of 7.62x51mm ammo, any bullet would do. I doubt Cummins saw any of the food or ammo.

Next, we acquired a dozen singlewide mobile homes, a larger septic system, leech field materials and installed an industrial sized septic system. I was easier to install a regulator on a propane trailer and put in hard plumbing for the gas. Our guards moved their own furniture to the trailers and we donated the trailer furniture to the churches. That left us with a pair of problems, wood heaters and a larger well. Mom and Mac went into Springfield and arranged for the well driller and several of us ranged far and wide locating wood burning stoves.

Jack and Sandy were given first choice and took a 3 bedroom model. Next came the second in command followed by the Ranger, the married couple and remaining 8 trailers were selected by one of the guards and his wife. We had 2 spare trailers, for the moment plus Jack and Sandy's travel trailer for emergencies.

A Deputy from Marshfield came to the property and for a week and held classes. When the security staff passed the test, they were sworn in as Reserve Deputies and actually given badges. Minimum caliber handgun was 9mm with .40S&W or .45acp preferred. Pistols were preferred over revolvers, unless they had speed loaders, in which case, the minimum caliber was .357 magnum. The Reserve Deputies wouldn't be paid and had to supply the handgun, magazines, patrol rifle 5.56x45mm or larger, and a 12-gauge riot



gun with extended magazine. An armorer was available to install the Choate magazine extensions, if necessary. Chokes were to be cylinder bore or improved cylinder. One radio, a 12v (13.8) car radio, would be provided.

Uniforms were unavailable but the suggested duty uniform was MARPAT, ACU or ABU; it was our choice, but everyone had to wear the same uniform. Jack was given the Deputy rank of Captain, and the second and third in commands, Lieutenant. Jack was to appoint two Sergeants, one for each 12 hour shift and a Corporal as his backup. It seemed to me that we had more Chiefs than Indians. Mac found the situation unusual, to say the least. We get attacked in the middle of the night and defeat the attack only to find a Deputy on our doorstep not long after training us to become Reserve Deputies. It wasn't limited to our Security Staff, Mac and I were included along with Mom and Sara if they so desired. Sara did, Mom didn't and Alice didn't get the offer.

Jack wasn't too thrilled to be an officer either and went to Marshfield to talk with the Sheriff. He stayed a Gunny, the Lieutenants became Staff Sergeants, the Sergeants and Corporals retained their existing ranks. The uniform they ended up with was the ACU. While they were picking up the uniforms at the Fort, they also picked up Improved Outer Tactical Vests with E-SAPI plates. Enough, it seemed, for every teen and adult on the farm.

In order to resolve the food shortage, we met with each of the farmers in the area. Mac and I explained what we'd done and urged them to share a portion of their corn, oats, wheat if they had it and extra vegetables using the church charities as their dispersing agents. Reaction was mixed, with about half agreeing on the spot and the rest taking the matter under advisement.

We traded for coal and firewood plus harvested our own firewood. However, we had bigger fish to fry. A pair of 10,000-gallon diesel tanks was a lot for pair of QD 12.5s, but nothing for the bigger generators which could burn as much as 14gph, apiece. We ended up going shopping for large fuel tanks, 30,000-gallons or more. We eventually found a new truck stop under construction. The tanks were off the trailers and in place but unconnected and unfilled. There were 6 tanks, all 40,000-gallons and a pair of 20,000-gallon gasoline tanks in similar circumstances. We used the crane sitting there to load the tanks and bring them back to the farm, one at a time.

We excavated holes, installed and plumbed them and emptied our existing stock from the extra tanks followed by emptying the existing pair of 10,000-gallon tanks. When we were finished, we had about 100,000-gallons of diesel meaning we were 140,000-gallons short. We also needed to fill those gasoline tanks and stabilize any new gasoline or diesel we found. This was starting to become a problem because we were running out of stabilizer and anti-gel. Our solution was to send two men with the farm truck, a pallet jack and food, water and ammo to find what we needed. They had a portable ham radio and would radio back grid coordinates when they found the fuel and loaded the stabilizers on the truck.

We photocopied a sheet of ¼" graph paper onto a sheet transparency paper and taped that over a map of Missouri and repeated the process for Arkansas. We made copies for them and for us after labeling the grid; alphabetical north-south, numerical east-west. The maps were called map 1 and map 2. If they found fuel, it would be gas, #1 (kerosene) or number #2 (diesel). Other fuels would be identified by name, like JP-8, etc. If they found more stabilizer or anti-gel than they could haul, they would identify it as category 1A (PRI-D), 1B (PRI-G) or 2 (anti-gel) and the container size. Elaborate? Not really; if someone else wanted fuel or stabilizers, they were free to look for their own.

They could also radio back 11-48 with coordinates and we'd get there ASAP. In the radio code used by California Highway Patrol dispatchers and Officers, 11-99 means Officer needs assistance. Other jurisdictions use 10-33 and even signal 13. ASAP didn't mean right away, it specifically meant as soon as possible. They were instructed to avoid contact as much as possible because we were salvaging not stealing from people in possession.

I counted 9 tankers, most of them either 16,000-gallon or 18,000-gallon. If we could find a large enough of a supply, we could stabilize the fuel as it was loaded, unload it into our tanks and return and refill the tankers. You realize that some of the larger truck stop may have as much as a million gallons of diesel and 50-100,000-gallons of gasoline on hand at any given time. Products Research, Inc. (PRI) has a few specific distributors too. Easy to find retailers are anywhere large amounts of marine diesel fuel are sold. In our case, the distributor was in Springfield and provided PRI Stabilizers for most of the marinas in the area, ranging from pints, quarts, gallons, 5 gallon cans and 55 gallon drums.

Mac said the largest volume truck stop in the US was the I-80 truck stop in Walcott, Iowa. We'd decided to save that for last and started hitting truck stops along the interstates. We found more than we could store and added additional double tankers. Our actual fuel usage was closer to a 50% load unless we ran air conditioners. I was standing looking at all of those tankers one day after I'd returned from the field with something nagging me. Something was clearly missing.

"Mac, check out that parking lot of tankers. What's missing?"

"Off hand? A berm so if the fuel goes up, we don't lose all of the housing."

"Yeah, that's it. Can we do it?"

"I guess. It might be better to hire it done unless you want to change our schedule to 28/8."

"Sorry, my day and week and stretchers are broken."

"Well, you did construction, so you know the companies. Know anyone who could do a good job fast?"

“Yeah, but I don’t know if they’re still in business.”

“Take tomorrow morning and check into them. Tell them we’d like the berm to protect 20 tankers. Can do?”

“I’m on it.”

“I’ll finish the field you were working.”

Even running both generators full time, there really wasn’t a fuel shortage, provided we got there first. It would take the short side of ¼ million gallons per year, of free fuel. I’ll use as a lead into our next issue, growing space for our herds. We agreed we could probably use a ¼ section for permanent pasture. There was a fenced half section across the road that we could use. It was easier using the 320 than putting in additional fence. That would result in another 75 acres which could be added to the garden and more row crops and/or hay. The principal crop cattle and horse eat is hay while a pig will eat anything.

It took me three tries to track down a contractor with the equipment and labor to build the berm. He and his two sons would put it in for food for 3 families of four for a year, replacement of fuel used installing the berm and hauling the soil. We could choose aggregate covered with either sand or clay. The soil was \$50 per truckload. Once we shook hands, the deal was made and they began hauling -3/4” aggregate the next day and mixing in the clay.

Rather than argue over the fuel, we filled their tanks every night. There was space between the berm and homes for any of the tankers and the propane we always stored behind the berm. Referring once again to Percivale George Jackson, their idea of what constituted enough food for a family of 4 for one year was at odds with what Mac I agreed was a sufficient amount. It was easier to give them each a hog and steer than argue. They left with full tanks and returned to the food. We loaded 3 steers and three hogs on the farm truck and potatoes, onions, 4 kinds of beans and 24 cases of canned vegetables.

Our roving patrol brought back the truckload of PRI products indicating there were more at the same location and we sent them back for the rest. We were hauling the fuel every chance we had and were healthy in that regard. I still wanted another large propane tank, on the order of 30,000-gallons net storage space. They spotted one but it was a project for the following year.

Then, they picked up on the grapevine that there were 3 Trinity Industries 109”x 67’ 30,000 gallon 260 psi tanks in Raytown, MO, SE of KC. They drove up, made the deal and began hauling back one tank with cradles at a time. We waited until all three tanks were in place, plumbed and filled the first, afterwards switching from our tanker. It should last us 10 years once we got the 3 tanks filled. All twelve homes, the travel trailer

and the main house had propane appliances and each had received a 21ft<sup>3</sup> upright freezer for beef, pork, poultry and vegetables if they didn't already have one.

It was getting to be same-oh, same-oh and we didn't mind at all. The ladies were close to finishing with the enlarged garden, we had one crop left to harvest and the NWS was predicting a mild winter. The thing I liked about the NWS was that they were right, about half the time. Our activities for this coming winter were firewood harvest, replacing the fuel we'd used, and tending to the livestock. We also intended to build an underpass so the livestock could move from the barn to the new pasture. In addition, Sara and the wives had a short list of supplies they badly needed. They told us if we couldn't find the things, corner the supply on cotton diapers and they'd make their own. They could be soaked, washed and reused.

We could get Northern bath tissue by the truckload from Georgia Pacific in Crossett, Arkansas. That wasn't the product they needed. The manufacturers were Kimberly Clark and Johnson & Johnson so we weren't going to be able to avoid going to Wisconsin which was closer than New Jersey.

We took the three best semi tractors we had with drums of extra stabilized fuel strapped on back. We made it to Green Bay despite the snow, refilled the vehicles tanks putting the drums in the sleeping compartments, hooked up to the loaded trailers at the loading docks and headed home. On the way back, we ran into a roadblock. They were using a few old cars across the lane of the interstate. We sped up and the momentum of the big semi blew through the roadblock like a whirlwind. They saw us coming and ran rather than trying to shoot us. I'll settle for luck any day.

Needless to say, we had a passel of happy women on our hands. Most had enough for themselves for a while, but the kids included daughters like Danni who would need the things sooner or later. We inventoried the trailers and discovered we had nearly two trailers of feminine hygiene products, including a few pallets of puffs and the remainder was Charmin. That meant no outhouse in the foreseeable future or using crumpled paper when you were done. All in all, a very worthwhile trip.

Which brings us to the third part of the story.

### **The Unconvinced Housewife – Part 3 – After**

Things were settling down and various military units were making their presence known providing some food and a fair amount of medical care. Palin did issue some Executive Orders. They concerned, among other things, firearms laws which she suspended for the duration. She was joined by Santorum on the NWS announcement. They also permitted salvaging or scavenging truly abandoned property but required a note be left detailing the property taken, when it was taken and where it could be recovered from if the owner later surfaced. People taking property by force from others would be judged by the nearest Company level or higher military officer and then shot.

A few isolated utilities were being brought back online, individually, by the Corps of Engineers. The greatest problem was ensuring that the power wouldn't be fed to destroyed areas where it could cause more harm than good. For the moment, the easiest generation facilities to reactivate were hydroelectric and coal fueled. She superficially mentioned Missouri as an example. It had two nuked out cities which could be isolated and 85% of the energy came from coal power. I think the lights are coming back on!

Fuel problems would be solved only when enough refineries could be brought back online. Sufficient crude oil was available from the fields in the lower 48, off the California coast and from Alaska for the interim period. The estimated current usage had dropped by a factor of 20 with most being used by the military, fuel treatments, both stabilizers and anti-gels were being looked into so existing supplies of old fuel could be restored and used.

They didn't really affect us here on the farm. We had ~240,000-gallons in the ground and ~136,000-gallons of diesel in tankers. We also had a lot of stabilized gasoline, and adequate supplies of propane. We hadn't regressed 100 years as had been foreseen, we'd used the best technology had to offer to meet our needs. The same couldn't be said for everyone and sales of draft horses were brisk. The riding horse herd had been built to the point where we could spare a few geldings and they also sold like hotcakes although they only had halters.

Danni, Bobby and Paul were growing up and it seemed like only yesterday that they been in diapers. We had started on the Marlin .22, moved to the 20-gauge and finally to the Bushmasters. They could only handle the cowboy loads for the .45s and they were a handful. We acquired more land, the second 320 of the land across the road and an 80 acre patch which we divided into 32 2 acre lots with a small 16 acre lake. Log homes supplied by a log home manufacturer who had resumed business were built on each location after a well and septic system was installed. Over time we found enough of the 1,100 gallon propane tanks and appliances to outfit the homes. Underground wiring was installed and electricity was initially provided from generators until the power came back online. The power for our area now came from City Utilities of Springfield

As teenagers, Danni, Bobby and Paul began to come into their own. Danni was by far the best rider and could have no doubt participated in Rodeos and won. Both of her

brothers were good riders, but Sara and I doubted they would ever be quite as good as Daniele.

Alice never fully recovered from shooting James. She did her best to fit in and pull her own weight, but there was a melancholy there and both Sara and I believe it led to her death at age 68. Mom and Mac had slowed and somewhere between their 65<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays and had retired. They took one of those log cabins on the 80 and Mac kept an eye on things. He radioed over whenever they needed another tanker brought over to supply diesel for the generator.

When the lights came back on, the only time we heard from them was when they came to visit the kids, which they did when they felt like it, not when the kids actually had free time. Sara and I now had two sections and 4 hired hands. I worked with her on the hard part of canning, putting the filled boxes away. I had also become an average or better rider and rode the fields keeping a weather eye for problems before they became major issues.

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In our area the banditry that did exist was mostly overcome by the local law enforcement and the MNG. After a couple of election cycles, the new Sheriff revoked the reserve Deputy status of all our folks except for Jack. Jack ran against him in the next election and won. We got the status back!

We returned the M72s and assorted hand grenades, minus smoke, to the MNG. We also cleared the soil off the roof of the barn. The fighting positions were filled in when one of the children fell into one and broke his fibula. One thing remained a constant, Saturday Weapons Practice.

We didn't have many who could be called snipers. Most everyone could shoot MOA shots out to the effective range of his/her rifle. The Barrett's were good rifles, but not as accurate as some. The most accurate rifle we had was the McMillian Tac-50 which shot 0.5MOA groups. We had one sniper and he and his observer were allowed extra time to maintain their skills. It worked out well; he and his observer was a married couple named Dan and Sara.

Did we really need a security force now that things had settled down? Yes and no. With Jack now the Sheriff; our security force gave him Deputies in the southwestern part of the county, if needed. We continued to go armed even if it was inconvenient. Sara and I were included in the Reserve Deputy pool, providing a female Deputy should circumstances warrant, like when a female prisoner had to be searched.

Percentage wise, Law Enforcement really suffered, perhaps due to their 'protect and serve' mentality. Reserve Deputies partially filled that void and some of the Reserve Deputies eventually became fulltime Deputies. No so much from our group, but from the

group up at Marshfield. The Missouri light bars were mostly Code 3 products before the attacks and were red, white and blue. I mention it in passing, we never had light bars.

How would things be in the future? To quote Tom Cruise, "I don't know, but uh, it's looking good so far." Our kids weren't really kids anymore. Sara and I had begun to slow down, not uncommon at our age considering the hard work it took to get through 'the during'.

We had a new President, a Democrat, who was a moderate. There were a few liberals left, there always will be some. There were also a few conservative Republicans, but fewer than before the war. After all that had happened, those nations that had surviving populations finally began to work together. If they'd just done that before the attacks, things could have been so different. The US had the most military hardware left after the war although they lacked crews, pilots, support and logistics personnel. If a country had a beef with another country, they had to settle it themselves, no more of that world policeman crap.

Sara and I discussed whether or not to close out our journal. We decided we would with a qualification. Should something significant happen during our lifetimes, we'd reopen it and add that to the journal. Otherwise, the journal will remain here on the farm, in our home, and be updated by Danni, Bobby or Paul. Danni has an interest in one of the boys here but we're not ready to allow her to marry too early. There is something gained when you wait until you're a bit more mature and there is nothing pressing which would, in our opinions, justify an early marriage. Bobby, who now prefers Rob, is past that stage where girls are something to be endured and he looks them right in the face, assuming their faces are located about 6"-8" below their chins.

Paul is the most reserved of our children and hasn't really discovered girls beyond being competitors. With those reservations come a great deal of patience and I may give him my Tac-50 because he is most likely to get some value from it.

We never set out to profit by the misfortunes of our fellow citizens, but for the most part, that's how it ended up. When Mom died, the gold was in our gun safe and her securities were almost valueless. We held onto to them in case the companies she owned shares of were revived and began producing dividends or paying interest on their bonds.

Mac remained in their home until he passed about two years later from radiation induced cancer. I was surprised I didn't develop it; I spent nearly as much time out of the shelter when the radiation was still high as he did. I read up on the subject later and the operative word was, could not would, get cancer. When the kids take over the farm, Sara and I might move to Arizona. One of those Patriot Fiction authors, TOM, had a thing for Arizona and M1A rifles. Maybe he knew something we didn't, about Arizona. There was nothing he could tell us about the M1A. It, along with its parents the M1 Garand and M14, was the best rifles the US military ever used. Even these days an M1A is a prized possession and that outfit in Genesco, Illinois has resumed production. Because of the plethora of assault rifles chambered in 7.62x51mm, the 5.56x45mm was

finally retired as a primary weapon. It seemed that about a dozen companies, both large and small, were producing rifles like the SCAR-H and SCAR-L. The major producers were H&K, FN, and several others.

I did get some of the third generation 1873 SAAs and other firearms with historical significance. They weren't collector items in my book, they were fun firearms.

Most of those singlewides mobile homes are long gone, returned to wherever we got them, sans furniture. The furniture was moved over to the log homes as our people moved from something intended to be temporary to permanent dwellings. We sort of got fire sale prices on those log homes, buying in volume and taking them as fast as they rolled off the assembly floor.

We're going fishing today at the small lake on the 80. The Game Commission added large and small mouth bass and crappies. They said that water was too warm for trout. We managed to add a few catfish we'd taken elsewhere. They aren't producing much action, yet. We had a brief 'discussion' with the Game Commission over size limits. We told them, private lake, private rules.

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